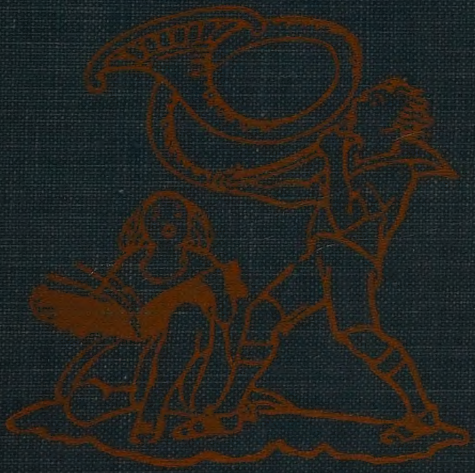
THIS SINGING WORLD



LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Property of

201

THIS SINGING WORLD

(Junior Edition)

A COLLECTION OF MODERN POETRY
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Collected and Edited by
LOUIS UNTERMEYER

EDITOR OF "YESTERDAY AND TODAY," "MODERN AMERICAN POETRY," ETC.

Illustrations by
DECIE MERWIN

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THIS EDITION

FOR

ESTALINE WILSON

WHO FIRST SUGGESTED IT

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE READER HIMSELF (OR HERSELF)

You won't like all of these poems. Even though I'm not sure just who you are, you couldn't possibly care for every single one of them. Nobody could. There are, in this remarkable world, as many different tastes as there are flavors. And that is why I have included not only so many poems but so many *kinds* of poems. Perhaps you're especially fond of music. Then you will read many of these verses for the sheer sound of them: for the throb and beat of the rhymes, for the little, tinkling feet that tap their toes to an even measure, for the tunes that shape themselves as the words sing out with even more melody than meaning. Perhaps — am I right? — you are something of a dreamer. You can see castles in the clouds, pictures in the dying fire; you know that the wayside fern often conceals a frightened fairy and that every twilight has its own pet phantom. You will find them all here — friendly beasts, babies with fairy-laughter, dinkey-birds in amfalula trees, enchanted shirts and singing mermaids — all in a world of phantasy whose colors are lovelier and livelier than those the eye can see. Perhaps you are a boy who, with one eye on your homework and the other on the batting averages, has always considered poetry a sort of childish sugar-candy — "a sentimental lollipop" (I've heard you say it!) "for silly girls." Now, wait a moment. Read the ballads of Rudyard Kipling (You have? Well,

read them again!), listen to the rousing voices in the "Heroic Heart," spend a few minutes with the writers who will help you discover the everyday magic in "Common Things." Perhaps, however, you don't like to be talked to quite so seriously — at least, not all the time. Well, nobody can prevent your turning to the hop-skip-and-a-leap of the "Laughing Legends," or the galloping nonsense in "Rhyme without Reason." Perhaps — terrible thought! — you don't like to read at all, but prefer romping and swinging along in the pure joy of out-of-doors. Don't think you can escape so easily! See if you don't feel the wind on your forehead and the blood racing in your veins when you hear the marches in the section called "Open Roads" and the breezy trumpets blowing out of the "Breath of the Earth and Sea."

But whatever else you may look for (and, I hope, find), I think you will take pleasure not only in the sounds and the stories, but in the words themselves. The men and women who wrote the pieces in this book — in fact, all poets who ever lived — have enjoyed finding words to carry their feelings to others, and people have always enjoyed following the words. To-day there seem to be more people who wish to shape their thoughts into many different arrangements of words, and more people who share their enjoyment. Most of the poems in this book were written by living poets (all of them appeared during the last seventy years) — and so it is *this* singing world — your world as well as theirs — that is between these covers. Sometimes I think the poems are as much alive as the persons who wrote them — just as Oliver Twist and Robinson Crusoe and Hamlet and D'Artagnan and Danny Deever and Gulliver are as real as any man we know. Thomas Carlyle once said that every fine poem was, at

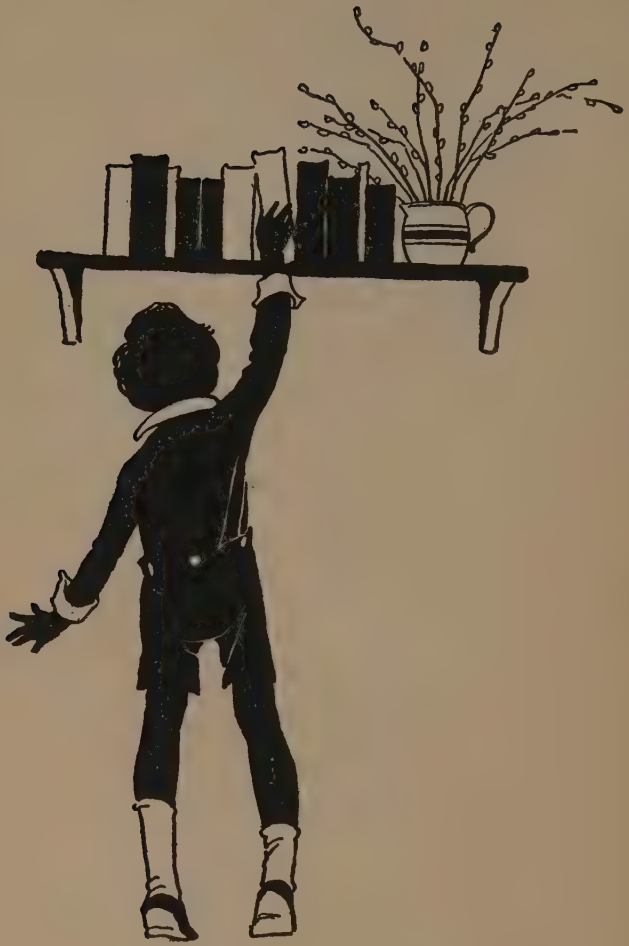
bottom, a kind of biography, the life of a man — "and," he went on, "it may also be said, there is no life of man but is a heroic poem of some sort, rhymed or unrhymed."

And that, I suppose, is the Moral of this Introduction. (Every introduction, you know, must have one!) If we want to make it simpler, all these sentences could be boiled down to a four-word problem in arithmetic:

Poetry + *People* = *Education* + *Enjoyment*

At any rate, they are four good words. They seem, like things equal to the same thing, equal to each other. They are, everywhere, and especially in this book, closely related. Let them stand together.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER



A FOREWORD

Child, do not throw this book about;
  Refrain from the unholy pleasure
Of cutting all the pictures out!
  Preserve it as your chiefest treasure.

Child, have you never heard it said
  That you are heir to all the ages?
Why, then, your hands were never made
  To tear these beautiful thick pages!

Your little hands were made to take
  The better things and leave the worse ones.
They also may be used to shake
  The Massive Paws of Elder Persons.

And when your prayers complete the day,
  Darling, your little tiny hands
Were also made, I think, to pray
  For men that lose their fairylands.

Hilaire Belloc

SONGS OF AWAKENING

SONGS OF AWAKENING

"THE YEAR'S AT THE SPRING" *

(*From "Pippa Passes"*)

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven —
All's right with the world.

Robert Browning

DAWN AND DARK

God with His million cares
  Went to the left or right,
Leaving our world; and the day
    Grew night.

Back from a sphere He came
  Over a starry lawn,
Looked at our world; and the dark
    Grew dawn.

Norman Gale

* See Note 1.

SPRING SONG[1]*

I love daffodils.
I love Narcissus when he bends his head.
I can hardly keep March and Spring and Sunday and
daffodils
Out of my rhyme of song.
Do you know anything about the spring
When it comes again?
God knows about it while winter is lasting.
Flowers bring him power in the spring,
And birds bring it and children.
He is sometimes sad and alone
Up there in the sky trying to keep his worlds happy.
I bring him songs
When he is in his sadness, and weary.
I tell him how I used to wander out
To study stars and the moon he made,
And flowers in the dark of the wood.
I keep reminding him about his flowers he has forgotten,
And that snowdrops are up.
What can I say to make him listen?
"God," I say,
"Don't you care!
Nobody must be sad or sorry
In the spring-time of flowers."

Hilda Conkling
(*Written at the age of six*)

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Poems by a Little Girl* by Hilda Conkling. Copyright, 1920, by Frederick A. Stokes Company. Page 6.
* See Note 2.

APRIL WINDS

In Spring the day is early
  And wakes a rosy world,
Where all the twigs are pearly
  And every bud's uncurled.
The birds are up and singing
  Before they can be seen, —
And April winds are winging
  Their way to make earth green.

In Spring the sun grows pleasant,
  To prove that he is fond,
He scatters for a present
  Gold pieces in each pond.
He sets the bell-flowers ringing
  With perfumed melodies, —
And April winds run swinging
  Among the startled trees.

In Spring the night is starry;
  Sleep taps upon the door
And not a heart is sorry
  Though daylight is no more;
It knows the night is bringing
  Dreams for another day, —
And April winds are singing
  The silent hours away.

Michael Lewis

SONG

April, April,
Laugh thy girlish laughter;
Then, the moment after,
Weep thy girlish tears,
April, that mine ears
Like a lover greetest,
If I tell thee, sweetest,
All my hopes and fears.
April, April,
Laugh thy golden laughter,
But, the moment after,
Weep thy golden tears!

William Watson

SUNRISE

The east is yellow as a daffodil.
Three steeples — three stark swarthy arms — are thrust
Up from the town. The gnarlèd poplars thrill
Down the long street in some keen salty gust —
Straight from the sea and all the sailing ships —
Turn white, black, white again, with noises sweet
And swift. Back to the night the last star slips.
High up the air is motionless, a sheet
Of light. The east grows yellower apace,
And trembles: then, once more, and suddenly,
The salt wind blows, and in that moment's space
Flame roofs, and poplar-tops, and steeples three;
From out the mist that wraps the river-ways,
The little boats, like torches, start ablaze.

Lizette Woodworth Reese

WHO CALLS?

"Listen, children, listen, won't you come into the night?
The stars have set their candle gleam, the moon her lanthorn light.
I'm piping little tunes for you to catch your dancing feet.
There's glory in the heavens, but there's magic in the street.
There's jesting here and carnival: the cost of a balloon
Is an ancient rhyme said backwards, and a wish upon the moon.
The city walls and city streets! — you shall make of these
As fair a thing as country roads and blossomy apple trees."

"What watchman calls us in the night, and plays a little tune
That turns our tongues to talking now of April, May and June?
Who bids us come with nimble feet and snapping finger tips?"
"I am the Spring, the Spring, the Spring with laughter on my lips."

Frances Clarke

BREATH OF THE EARTH AND SEA

BREATH OF THE EARTH AND SEA

GOD'S WORLD *

O World, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!
Thy mists that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with colour! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,
But never knew I this;
Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me, — let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

NATURE'S FRIEND

Say what you like,
All things love me!
I pick no flowers —
That wins the Bee.

* See Note 3.

The Summer's Moths
  Think my hand one —
To touch their wings —
  With Wind and Sun.

The garden Mouse
  Comes near to play;
Indeed, he turns
  His eyes away.

The Wren knows well
  I rob no nest;
When I look in,
  She still will rest.

The hedge stops Cows,
  Or they would come
After my voice
  Right to my home.

The Horse can tell,
  Straight from my lip,
My hand could not
  Hold any whip.

Say what you like
  All things love me!
Horse, Cow, and Mouse,
  Bird, Moth, and Bee.

W. H. Davies

WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

Who has seen the wind?
  Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling,
  The wind is passing thro'.

Who has seen the wind?
  Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads,
  The wind is passing by.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

STORM

You crash over the trees,
you crack the live branch —
the branch is white,
the green crushed,
each leaf is rent like split wood.

You burden the trees
with black drops,
you swirl and crash —
you have broken off a weighted leaf
in the wind,
it is hurled out,
whirls up and sinks,
a green stone.

"H. D."

THE STORM [1]

There came a wind like a bugle;
It quivered through the grass,
And a green chill upon the heat
So ominous did pass
We barred the windows and the doors
As from an emerald ghost;
The doom's electric moccasin
That very instant passed.
On a strange mob of panting trees,
And fences fled away,
And rivers where the houses ran
The living looked that day.
The bell within the steeple wild
The flying tidings whirled.
How much can come
And much can go,
And yet abide the world!

Emily Dickinson

VELVET SHOES *

Let us walk in the white snow
In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
At a tranquil pace,
Under veils of white lace.

[1] Copyright, Little, Brown and Company, 1890.
* See Note 4.

I shall go shod in silk,
And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
More beautiful
Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon the white down,
Upon silver fleece,
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes;
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow.

Elinor Wylie

FIRST FROST

A sparkling sunset, oranged to gold,
Rings like a bell of sorrow told,
Across the night of whistling cold;
For now an arm swings near and far
The brittle lamp of every star.
The flowers grow in the garden pied
Velvet, imperial, laughing-eyed,
While on them all hovers a breath,
The whistling frost of silver death.
I grieve to see the wine-red crowd
And watch and watch them, tall and proud,

And tell them that tonight death comes,
Beating the stars like kettle drums.
For the last time I kiss their breasts,
The lovely golden fleeting guests,
Made sad to think on morning's shore
Their beauty will be nevermore.
I grieve to see them fall and die
Where kindled, burning, sparkling high
The stars make mirrors of the sky.
I bid them farewell in their sleep,
Wrapped now in snowy silver seas,
For they, immortal, will but leap
Like us, to a more marvelous peace.
And here I sit by them and view
The solid sky as white frost comes,
Knocking the winds to silver dew,
Beating the stars like kettle drums.

Edwin Curran

SONG OF SUMMER

Dis is gospel weathah sho' —
  Hills is sawt o' hazy.
Meddahs level ez a flo'
  Callin' to de lazy.
Sky all white wif streaks o' blue,
  Sunshine softly gleamin',
D'ain't no wuk hit's right to do,
  Nothin's right but dreamin'.

Dreamin' by a rivah side
  Wif de watahs glist'nin',
Feelin' good an' satisfied
  Ez you lay a-list'nin'

To de little nakid boys
  Splashin' in de watah,
Hollerin' fu' to 'spress deir joys
  Jes' lak youngsters ought to.

Squir'l a-tippin' on his toes,
  So't to hide an' view you;
Whole flocks o' camp-meetin' crows
  Shoutin' hallelujah.
Peckahwood erpon de tree
  Tappin' lak a hammah;
Jaybird chattin' wif a bee,
  Tryin' to teach him grammah.

Breeze is blowin' wif perfume,
  Jes' enough to tease you;
Hollyhocks is all in bloom,
  Smellin' fu' to please you.
Go 'way, folks, an' let me 'lone,
  Times is gettin' dearah —
Summah's settin' on de th'one,
  An' I'm a-layin' neah huh!

Paul Laurence Dunbar

HARVEST SUNSET

Red gold of pools,
Sunset furrows six o'clock,
And the farmer done in the fields
And the cows in the barns with bulging udders.

Take the cows and the farmer,
Take the barns and bulging udders.
Leave the red gold of pools
And sunset furrows six o'clock.
The farmer's wife is singing.
The farmer's boy is whistling.
I wash my hands in red gold of pools.

Carl Sandburg

FOG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Carl Sandburg

GLIMPSE IN AUTUMN

Ladies at a ball
  Are not so fine as these
  Richly brocaded trees
That decorate the fall.

They stand against a wall
  Of crisp October sky,
  Their plumèd heads held high,
Like ladies at a ball.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

AUTUMN [1]

The morns are meeker than they were,
  The nuts are getting brown;
The berry's cheek is plumper,
  The rose is out of town.

The maple wears a gayer scarf,
  The field a scarlet gown.
Lest I should be old-fashioned,
  I'll put a trinket on.

Emily Dickinson

HOME-COMING

When I stepped homeward to my hill
  Dusk went before with quiet tread;
The bare laced branches of the trees
  Were as a mist about its head.

Upon its leaf-brown breast, the rocks
  Like great grey sheep lay silent-wise;
Between the birch trees' gleaming arms,
  The faint stars trembled in the skies.

The white brook met me half-way up
  And laughed as one that knew me well,
To whose more clear than crystal voice
  The frost had joined a crystal spell.

[1] Copyright, Little, Brown and Company, 1890.

The skies lay like pale-watered deep.
Dusk ran before me to its strand
And cloudily leaned forth to touch
The moon's slow wonder with her hand.

Léonie Adams

THE SEA GYPSY

I am fevered with the sunset,
I am fretful with the bay,
For the wander-thirst is on me
And my soul is in Cathay.

There's a schooner in the offing,
With her topsails shot with fire,
And my heart has gone aboard her
For the Islands of Desire.

I must forth again to-morrow!
With the sunset I must be
Hull down on the trail of rapture
In the wonder of the Sea.

Richard Hovey

A WANDERER'S SONG

A wind's in the heart of me, a fire's in my heels,
I am tired of brick and stone and rumbling wagon-wheels;
I hunger for the sea's edge, the limits of the land,
Where the wild old Atlantic is shouting on the sand.

Oh, I'll be going, leaving the noises of the street,
To where a lifting foresail-foot is yanking at the sheet;
To a windy, tossing anchorage where yawls and ketches[1] ride,
Oh, I'll be going, going, until I meet the tide.

[1] Yawls and ketches: two-masted boats.

And first I'll hear the sea-wind, the mewing of the gulls,
The clucking, sucking of the sea about the rusty hulls,
The songs at the capstan in the hooker warping out,
And then the heart of me'll know I'm there or thereabout.

Oh, I am tired of brick and stone, the heart of me is sick,
For windy green, unquiet sea, the realm of Moby Dick;
And I'll be going, going, from the roaring of the wheels,
For a wind's in the heart of me, a fire's in my heels.

John Masefield

OLD SHIPS

There is a memory stays upon old ships,
  A weightless cargo in the musty hold, —
Of bright lagoons and prow-caressing lips,
  Of stormy midnights, — and a tale untold.
They have remembered islands in the dawn,
  And windy capes that tried their slender spars,
And tortuous channels where their keels have gone,
  And calm blue nights of stillness and the stars.

Ah, never think that ships forget a shore,
  Or bitter seas, or winds that made them wise;
There is a dream upon them, evermore;
  And there be some who say that sunk ships rise
To seek familiar harbors in the night,
Blowing in mists, their spectral sails like light.

David Morton

BALLADE OF A SHIP

Down by the flash of the restless water
The dim White Ship like a white bird lay;
Laughing at life and the world they sought her,
And out she swung to the silvering bay.
Then off they flew on their roystering way,
And the keen moon fired the light foam flying
Up from the flood where the faint stars play,
And the bones of the brave in the wave are lying.

'Twas a king's fair son with a king's fair daughter,
And full three hundred beside, they say, —
Revelling on for the lone, cold slaughter
So soon to seize them and hide them for aye;
But they danced and they drank and their souls grew gay,
Nor ever they knew of a ghoul's eye spying
Their splendor a flickering phantom to stray
Where the bones of the brave in the wave are lying.

Through the mist of a drunken dream they brought her
(This wild white bird) for the sea-fiend's prey:
The pitiless reef in his hard clutch caught her,
And hurled her down where the dead men stay.
A torturing silence of wan dismay —
Shrieks and curses of mad souls dying —
Then down they sank to slumber and sway
Where the bones of the brave in the wave are lying.

ENVOY

Prince, do you sleep to the sound alway
Of the mournful surge and the sea-birds' crying? —
Or does love still shudder and steel still slay,
Where the bones of the brave in the wave are lying?

Edwin Arlington Robinson

HIGH-TIDE

I edged back against the night.
The sea growled assault on the wave-bitten shore.
And the breakers,
Like young and impatient hounds,
Sprang, with rough joy on the shrinking sand.
Sprang — but were drawn back slowly,
With a long, relentless pull,
Whimpering, into the dark.

Then I saw who held them captive;
And I saw how they were bound
With a broad and quivering leash of light,
Held by the moon,
As, calm and unsmiling,
She walked the deep fields of the sky.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

OPEN ROADS

THE JOYS OF THE ROAD

Now the joys of the road are chiefly these:
A crimson touch on the hard-wood trees;

A vagrant's morning wide and blue,
In early fall, when the wind walks, too;

A shadowy highway cool and brown,
Alluring up and enticing down

From rippled water to dappled swamp,
From purple glory to scarlet pomp;

The outward eye, the quiet will,
And the striding hart from hill to hill;

The tempter apple over the fence;
The cobweb bloom on the yellow quince;

The palish asters along the wood,
A lyric touch of the solitude;

An open hand, an easy shoe,
And a hope to make the day go through, —

Another to sleep with, and a third
To wake me up at the voice of a bird;

The resonant, far-listening morn,
And the hoarse whisper of the corn;

The crickets mourning their comrades lost,
In the night's retreat from the gathering frost;

(Or is it their slogan, plaintive and shrill,
As they beat on their corselets, valiant still?)

A hunger fit for the kings of the sea,
And a loaf of bread for Dickon and me;

A thirst like that of the Thirsty Sword,
And a jug of cider on the board;

An idle noon, a bubbling spring,
The sea in the pine-tops murmuring;

A scrap of gossip at the ferry;
A comrade neither glum nor merry,

Asking nothing, revealing naught,
But minting his words from a fund of thought,

A keeper of silence eloquent,
Needy, yet royally well content,

Of the mettled breed, yet abhorring strife,
And full of the mellow juice of life,

No fidget and no reformer, just
A calm observer of ought and must,

A lover of books, but a reader of man,
No cynic and no charlatan,

Who never defers and never demands,
But, smiling, takes the world in his hands, —

Seeing it good as when God first saw
And gave it the weight of his will for law.

And O the joy that is never won,
But follows and follows the journeying sun,

By marsh and tide, by meadow and stream,
A will-o'-the-wind, a light-o'-dream,

Delusion afar, delight anear,
From morrow to morrow, from year to year,

A jack-o'-lantern, a fairy fire,
A dare, a bliss, and a desire!

The racy smell of the forest loam,
When the stealthy, sad-heart leaves go home;

(O leaves, O leaves, I am one with you,
Of the mould and the sun and the wind and the dew!)

The broad gold wake of the afternoon;
The silent fleck of the cold new moon;

The sound of the hollow sea's release
From stormy tumult to starry peace;

With only another league to wend;
And two brown arms at the journey's end!

These are the joys of the open road —
For him who travels without a load.

Bliss Carman

THE SONG OF THE UNGIRT RUNNERS *

We swing ungirded hips,
  And lightened are our eyes;
The rain is on our lips,
  We do not run for prize.
We know not whom we trust
  Nor whitherward we fare,
But we run because we must
  Through the great wide air.

The waters of the seas
  Are troubled as by storm.
The tempest strips the trees
  And does not leave them warm.
Does the tearing tempest pause?
  Do the tree-tops ask it why?
So we run without a cause
  'Neath the big bare sky.

The rain is on our lips,
  We do not run for prize.
But the storm the water whips
  And the wave howls to the skies.

* See Note 5.

The winds arise and strike it
And scatter it like sand,
And we run because we like it
Through the broad bright land.

Charles Hamilton Sorley

THE WEST WIND

It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries;
I never hear the west wind but tears are in my eyes.
For it comes from the west lands, the old brown hills,
And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.

It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired as mine,
Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's like wine.
There is cool green grass there, where men may lie at rest,
And the thrushes are in song there, fluting from the nest.

"Will ye not come home, brother? ye have been long away,
It's April, and blossom time, and white is the may;
And bright is the sun, brother, and warm is the rain, —
Will ye not come home, brother, home to us again?

"The young corn is green, brother, where the rabbits run,
It's blue sky, and white clouds, and warm rain and sun.
It's song to a man's soul, brother, fire to a man's brain,
To hear the wild bees and see the merry spring again.

"Larks are singing in the west, brother, above the green wheat,
So will ye not come home, brother, and rest your tired feet?

I've a balm for bruised hearts, brother, sleep for aching eyes,"
Says the warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries.
It's the white road westwards is the road I must tread
To the green grass, the cool grass, and rest for heart and head,
To the violets and the warm hearts and the thrushes' song,
In the fine land, the west land, the land where I belong.

John Masefield

TO THE WINTER WIND

Wind of the winter, drive the ships home,
From tropic islands
Whirl the grey cloudrack,
Spatter the rocks with foam.

Blind wind of the night,
Raging, careering,
Shriek to me through the keyhole,
Shout to me down the chimney,
Whistle and moan through the pinewood out of sight.

Bring Christmas here,
The log on the hearth,
The cattle in stall.
Pile by the housedoor
The snowdrift, untroubled.
Put ice on the wall.

John Gould Fletcher

WANDER-THIRST

Beyond the East the sunrise, beyond the West the sea,
And East and West the wander-thirst that will not let me be;
It works in me like madness, dear, to bid me say good-bye;
For the seas call and the stars call, and oh! the call of the sky.

I know not where the white road runs, nor what the blue hills are,
But a man can have the Sun for friend, and for his guide a star;
And there's no end of voyaging when once the voice is heard,
For the river calls and the road calls, and oh! the call of a bird!

Yonder the long horizon lies, and there by night and day
The old ships draw to home again, the young ships sail away;
And come I may, but go I must, and, if men ask you why,
You may put the blame on the stars and the sun and the white road and the sky.

Gerald Gould

I WANT TO GO WANDERING

I want to go wandering. Who shall declare
I will regret if I dare?

To the rich days of age—
To some mid-afternoon—

A wide fenceless prairie,
  A lonely old tune,
Ant-hills and sunflowers,
  And sunset too soon.

Behind the brown mountain
  The sun will go down;
I shall climb, I shall climb,
  To the sumptuous crown;
To the rocks of the summit,
  And find some strange things: —
Some echo of echoes
  When the thunder-wind sings;
Old Spanish necklaces,
  Indian rings,
Or a feeble old eagle
  With great, dragging wings.
He may leave me and soar;
  But if he shall die,
I shall bury him deep
  While the thunder-winds cry.

And there, as the last of my earth-nights go:
What is the thing I shall know?

  With a feather cast off from his wings
  I shall write, be it revel or psalm,
  Or whisper of redwood, or cypress, or palm, —
  The treasure of dream that he brings.

  The soul of the eagle will call,
  Whether he lives or he dies: —

The cliff and the prairies call,
The sage-bush and starlight sing,
And the songs of my far-away Sangamon call
From the plume of the bird of the Rockies,
And midnight's omnipotent wing —
The last of my earth-nights will ring
With cries from a far haunted river,
And all of my wandering,
Wandering,
Wandering,
Wandering. . . .

Vachel Lindsay

DO YOU FEAR THE WIND?

Do you fear the force of the wind,
The slash of the rain?
Go face them and fight them,
Be savage again.
Go hungry and cold like the wolf,
Go wade like the crane:
The palms of your hands will thicken,
The skin of your cheeks will tan,
You'll grow ragged and weary and swarthy,
But you'll walk like a man!

Hamlin Garland

"I HEAR THE WOODLANDS CALLING"

I hear the woodlands calling, and their red is like the blare
Of trumpets in the air,
Where rebel Autumn plants her tents and crowns her gypsy hair.

I hear her beauty calling glad, with crimson and with gold,
As oft it called of old;
And I must forth and greet her there and clasp her close and hold.

As yesterday, again to-day, my heart will run to her,
The gypsy wanderer,
Through scarlet of the berry-pod and purple of the burr.

The vines that vision forth her cheeks shall tell me where she lies,
Soft gazing at the skies;
And I will steal upon her dreams and look into her eyes.

The sumach that repeats her lips shall tell me where she smiles,
Who still my heart beguiles,
And I will speak her face to face and lounge with her for miles.

A riot and a tangle there, a blur of gold and gray;
She surely went this way —
Or, so it seems, the maples cry, the cloudy asters say.

Oh, I must up and strike the trail, that often I have gone,
At sunset and at dawn,
Where all the beauty of the world puts all her splendor on.

I hear her bugles on the hills; I see her banners blowing,
And all her campfires glowing, —
The campfires of her dreams, — and I — I must be up and going.

Madison Cawein

AFTERNOON ON A HILL

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down!

Edna St. Vincent Millay

THE ROAD TO ANYWHERE

Across the places deep and dim,
And places brown and bare,
It reaches to the planet's rim —
The Road to Anywhere.

Now east is east, and west is west,
But north lies in between,
And he is blest whose feet have prest
The road that's cool and green.

The road of roads for them that dare
The lightest whim obey,
To follow where the moose or bear
Has brushed his headlong way.

The secrets that these tangles house
  Are step by step revealed,
While, to the sun, the grass and boughs
  A store of odors yield.

More sweet these odors in the sun
  Than swim in chemists' jars;
And when the fragrant day is done,
  Night — and a shoal of stars.

Oh, east is east, and west is west,
  But north lies full and fair;
And blest is he who follows free
  The Road to Anywhere.

Bert Leston Taylor

NOD

COMMON THINGS

. . . AND THE PAIL BY THE WALL
WOULD BE HALF FULL OF WATER AND STARS

COMMON THINGS

THE PASTURE

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I sha'n't be gone long. — You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I sha'n't be gone long. — *You come too.*

Robert Frost

SIMPLICITY [1]

How happy is the little stone
That rambles in the road alone,
And doesn't care about careers,
And exigencies never fears;
Whose coat of elemental brown
A passing universe put on;
And independent as the sun,
Associates or glows alone,
Fulfilling absolute decree
In casual simplicity.

Emily Dickinson

[1] Copyright, Little, Brown and Company, 1890.

PEDIGREE [1]

The pedigree of honey
Does not concern the bee;
A clover, any time, to him
Is aristocracy.

Emily Dickinson

LOVELIEST OF TREES

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride [2]
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

A. E. Housman

[1] Copyright, Little, Brown and Company, 1890.
[2] Woodland ride: a road cut through a forest or in a wood.

THE FIRST DANDELION

Simple and fresh and fair from winter's close emerging,
As if no artifice of fashion, business, politics, had ever been,
Forth from its sunny nook of sheltered grass — innocent, golden, calm as the dawn,
The spring's first dandelion shows its trustful face.

Walt Whitman

DANDELION [1]

O Little Soldier with the golden helmet,
What are you guarding on my lawn?
You with your green gun
And your yellow beard,
Why do you stand so stiff?
There is only the grass to fight!

Hilda Conkling
(*Written at the age of eight*)

TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night.

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Poems by A Little Girl* by Hilda Conkling. Copyright, 1920, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The agèd year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue — blue — as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

William Cullen Bryant

DAISIES

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their singing was, "Earth, it is well!"
And all of their dancing was, "Life, thou art good!"

Bliss Carman

THE HUNGRY HEART

My heart, being hungry, feeds on food
  The fat of heart despise.
Beauty where beauty never stood,
  And sweet where no sweet lies
I gather to my querulous need,
Having a growing heart to feed.

It may be, when my heart is dull,
  Having attained its girth,
I shall not find so beautiful
  The meagre shapes of earth,
Nor linger in the rain to mark
The smell of tansy through the dark.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

TO A SNOWFLAKE

What heart could have thought you? —
Past our devisal
(O filigree petal!)
Fashioned so purely,
Fragilely, surely,
From what Paradisal
Imagineless metal,
Too costly for cost?
Who hammered you, wrought you,
From argentine vapor? —

"God was my shaper.
Passing surmisal,
He hammered, He wrought me,
From curled silver vapor,

To lust of his mind: —
Thou couldst not have thought me!
So purely, so palely,
Tinily, surely,
Mightily, frailly,
Insculped and embossed,
With His hammer of wind,
And His graver of frost."

Francis Thompson

SONG FOR A LITTLE HOUSE[1]

I'm glad our house is a little house,
Not too tall nor too wide:
I'm glad the hovering butterflies
Feel free to come inside.

Our little house is a friendly house,
It is not shy or vain;
It gossips with the talking trees,
And makes friends with the rain.

And quick leaves cast a shimmer of green
Against our whited walls,
And in the phlox, the courteous bees
Are paying duty calls.

Christopher Morley

[1] From *Chimney Smoke* by Christopher Morley. Copyright, 1917, 1920, 1921, George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

PRAYER FOR THIS HOUSE

May nothing evil cross this door,
And may ill-fortune never pry
About these windows; may the roar
And rains go by.

Strengthened by faith, the rafters will
Withstand the battering of the storm.
This hearth, though all the world grow chill
Will keep you warm.

Peace shall walk softly through these rooms,
Touching your lips with holy wine,
Till every casual corner blooms
Into a shrine.

Laughter shall drown the raucous shout
And, though the sheltering walls are thin,
May they be strong to keep hate out
And hold love in.

Louis Untermeyer

ESCAPE AT BEDTIME

The lights from the parlor and kitchen shone out
Through the blinds and the windows and bars;
And high overhead and all moving about,
There were thousands of millions of stars.
There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree,
Nor of people in church or the Park,
As the crowds of the stars that looked down upon me,
And that glittered and winked in the dark.

The Dog, and the Plough, and the Hunter, and all,
And the star of the sailor, and Mars,
These shone in the sky, and the pail by the wall
Would be half full of water and stars.
They saw me at last, and they chased me with cries,
And they soon had me packed into bed;
But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes,
And the stars going round in my head.

Robert Louis Stevenson

THE DAY IS DONE *

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

* See Note 6.

Not from the grand old masters,
  Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
  Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
  Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor;
  And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
  Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
  Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor,
  And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
  Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
  The restless pulse of care,
And come like a benediction
  That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
  The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
  The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
  And the cares that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
  And as silently steal away.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

THE STREET-MUSICIAN

He plays for all the little side-streets, while
A worn, half-wistful smile
Kindles his face when people passing here
Stop and draw near.

So slight a note . . . and yet the thundering town
Has failed to roar it down;
Under the huge despairs, the shattering blows,
It lifts and grows.

Incongruous, unbidden and absurd;
And yet the street is stirred.
As men behold, for all its dark disguise,
The Dream arise!

Anonymous

A WASTED DAY

I spoiled the day;
Hotly, in haste,
All the calm hours
I gashed and defaced.

Let me forget,
Let me embark
— Sleep for my boat —
And sail through the dark.

Till a new day
Heaven shall send,
Whole as an apple,
Kind as a friend.

Frances Cornford

THE COMMONPLACE

The commonplace I sing;
How cheap is health! how cheap nobility!
The open air I sing, freedom, toleration,
(Take here the mainest lesson — less from books — less from the schools,)
The common day and night — the common earth and waters,
Your farm — your work, trade, occupation,
The democratic wisdom underneath, like solid ground for all.

Walt Whitman

PLACES

KEEPSAKE MILL

PLACES

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

William Butler Yeats

THE WAVES OF BREFFNY

The grand road from the mountain goes shining to the sea,
And there is traffic on it and many a horse and cart,
But the little roads of Cloonagh are dearer far to me
And the little roads of Cloonagh go rambling through my heart.

A great storm from the ocean goes shouting o'er the hill,
And there is glory in it; and terror on the wind:
But the haunted air of twilight is very strange and still,
And the little winds of twilight are dearer to my mind.

The great waves of the Atlantic sweep storming on their way,
Shining green and silver with the hidden herring shoal;
But the little waves of Breffny have drenched my heart in spray,
And the little waves of Breffny go stumbling through my soul.

Eva Gore-Booth

TEWKESBURY ROAD

It is good to be out on the road, and going one knows not where,
Going through meadow and village, one knows not whither nor why;
Through the grey light drift of the dust, in the keen cool rush of the air,
Under the flying white clouds, and the broad blue lift of the sky;

And to halt at the chattering brook, in the tall green fern at the brink
Where the harebell grows, and the gorse, and the foxgloves purple and white;
Where the shy-eyed delicate deer troop down to the pools to drink,
When the stars are mellow and large at the coming on of the night.

O! to feel the warmth of the rain, and the homely smell
of the earth,
Is a tune for the blood to jig to, a joy past power of
words;
And the blessed green comely meadows seem all a-ripple
with mirth
At the lilt of the shifting feet, and the dear wild cry
of the birds.

John Masefield

THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

They are all gone away,
The House is shut and still,
There is nothing more to say.

Through broken walls and gray
The winds blow bleak and shrill:
They are all gone away.

Nor is there one to-day
To speak them good or ill:
There is nothing more to say.

Why is it then we stray
Around that sunken sill?
They are all gone away.

And our poor fancy-play
For them is wasted skill:
There is nothing more to say.

There is ruin and decay
  In the House on the Hill:
They are all gone away,
There is nothing more to say.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

INTERIOR

The little moths are creeping
  Across the cottage pane;
On the floor the chickens gather,
  And they make talk and complain.

And she sits by the fire
  Who has reared so many men;
Her voice is low like the chickens'
  With the things she says again.

"The sons that come back do be restless,
  They search for the thing to say;
Then they take thought like the swallows,
  And the morrow brings them away.

"In the old, old days, upon Innish,
  The fields were lucky and bright,
And if you lay down you'd be covered
  By the grass of one soft night."

She speaks and the chickens gather,
  And they make talk and complain,
While the little moths are creeping
  Across the cottage pane.

Padraic Colum

KEEPSAKE MILL

Over the borders, a sin without pardon,
Breaking the branches and crawling below,
Out through the breach in the wall of the garden,
Down by the banks of the river, we go.

Here is the mill with the humming of thunder,
Here is the weir with the wonder of foam,
Here is the sluice with the race running under —
Marvellous places, though handy to home!

Sounds of the village grow stiller and stiller,
Stiller the note of the birds on the hill;
Dusty and dim are the eyes of the miller,
Deaf are his ears with the moil [1] of the mill.

Years may go by, and the wheel in the river
Wheel as it wheels for us, children, to-day,
Wheel and keep roaring and foaming for ever
Long after all of the boys are away.

Home from the Indies and home from the ocean,
Heroes and soldiers we all shall come home;
Still we shall find the old mill wheel in motion,
Turning and churning that river to foam.

You with the bean that I gave when we quarrelled,
I with your marble of Saturday last,
Honoured and old and all gaily apparelled,
Here we shall meet and remember the past.

Robert Louis Stevenson

[1] *Moil:* noisy labor, drudgery.

FULL MOON

(*Santa Barbara*)

I listened, there was not a sound to hear
In the great rain of moonlight pouring down,
The eucalyptus trees were carved in silver,
And a light mist of silver lulled the town.

I saw far off the gray Pacific bearing
A broad white disk of flame,
And on the garden-walk a snail beside me
Tracing in crystal the slow way he came.

Sara Teasdale

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

The little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost

A BROOK IN THE CITY

The farm house lingers, though averse to square
With the new city street it has to wear
A number in. But what about the brook
That held the house as in an elbow-crook?
I ask as one who knew the brook, its strength
And impulse, having dipped a finger length
And made it leap my knuckle, having tossed
A flower to try its currents where they crossed.
The meadow grass could be cemented down
From growing under pavements of a town;
The apple trees be sent to hearth-stone flame.
Is water wood to serve a brook the same?
How else dispose of an immortal force
No longer needed? Staunch it at its source
With cinder loads dumped down? The brook was thrown
Deep in a sewer dungeon under stone
In fetid darkness still to live and run —
And all for nothing it had ever done
Except forget to go in fear perhaps.
No one would know except for ancient maps
That such a brook ran water. But I wonder
If from its being kept forever under,
These thoughts may not have risen that so keep
This new-built city from both work and sleep.

Robert Frost

CHILDREN AND OTHER PEOPLE

TEN YEARS OLD

A BABY'S FEET

A baby's feet, like sea-shells pink,
  Might tempt, should heaven see meet,
An angel's lips to kiss, we think,
  A baby's feet.

Like rose-hued sea-flowers toward the heat
  They stretch and spread and wink
Their ten soft buds that part and meet.

No flower-bells that expand and shrink
  Gleam half so heavenly sweet,
As shine on life's untrodden brink
  A baby's feet.

A. C. Swinburne

"ONE, TWO, THREE!"

It was an old, old, old, old lady,
  And a boy that was half-past three;
And the way that they played together
  Was beautiful to see.

She couldn't go romping and jumping,
  And the boy no more could he;
For he was a thin little fellow,
  With a thin little twisted knee.

They sat in the yellow sunlight,
Out under the maple tree;
And the game they played I'll tell you,
Just as it was told to me.

It was Hide-and-Go-Seek they were playing,
Though you'd never have known it to be —
With an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy with a twisted knee.

The boy would bend his face down
On his little sound right knee,
And he guessed where she was hiding
In guesses One, Two, Three.

"You are in the china closet!"
He would laugh and cry with glee —
It wasn't the china closet,
But he still had Two and Three.

"You are up in papa's big bedroom,
In the chest with the queer old key!"
And she said: "You are *warm* and *warmer;*
But you are not quite right," said she.

"It can't be the little cupboard
Where mamma's things used to be —
So it must be in the little clothes-press, gran'ma,"
And he found her with his Three.

Then she covered her face with her fingers,
That were wrinkled and white and wee,
And she guessed where the boy was hiding,
With a One and a Two and a Three.

And they never had stirred from their places
  Right under the maple tree —
This old, old, old, old lady
  And the boy with the lame little knee —
This dear, dear, dear, dear old lady,
  And the boy who was half-past three.

Henry Cuyler Bunner

BIBLE STORIES

The room was low and small and kind;
  And in its cupboard old,
The shells were set out to my mind;
  The cups I loved with rims of gold.

Then, with that good gift which she had,
  My mother showed at will,
David, the ruddy Syrian lad,
  With his few sheep upon a hill;

A shop down a rude country street,
  The chips strewn on the floor,
And faintly keen across the heat;
  The simple kinsfolk at the door;

Mary amid the homely din,
  As slim as violet;
The little Jesus just within,
  About His father's business set.

My mother rose, and then I knew
  As she stood smiling there,
Her gown was of that gentle blue
  Which she had made the Virgin wear.

How fair the very chairs were grown!
  The gilt rose on each back
Into a Syrian rose was blown,
  And not our humble gold and black.

That week long, in our acres old,
  Lad David did I see;
From out our cups with rims of gold,
  The little Jesus supped with me.

Lizette Woodworth Reese

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

Between the dark and the daylight,
  When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
  That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
  The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
  And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
  Descending the broad hall-stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
  And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:
  Yet I know by their very eyes
They are plotting and planning together
  To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down in the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

A CHILD'S PRAYER

(*Ex Ore Infantium*)

Little Jesus, wast Thou shy
Once, and just so small as I?
And what did it feel like to be
Out of Heaven, and just like me?
Didst Thou sometimes think of *there,*
And ask where all the angels were?
I should think that I would cry
For my house all made of sky;
I would look about the air,
And wonder where my angels were;
And at waking 'twould distress me —
Not an angel there to dress me!

Hadst Thou ever any toys,
Like us little girls and boys?
And didst Thou play in Heaven with all
The angels, that were not too tall,
With stars for marbles? Did the things
Play *Can you see me?* through their wings?

Didst Thou kneel at night to pray,
And didst Thou join Thy hands, this way?
And did they tire, sometimes, being young?
And make the prayer seem very long?
And dost Thou like it best, that we,
Should join our hands to pray to Thee?
(I used to think, before I knew,
The prayer not said unless we do.)

And did Thy Mother at the night
Kiss Thee, and fold the clothes in right?
And didst Thou feel quite good in bed,
Kissed, and sweet, and Thy prayers said?

Thou canst not have forgotten all
That it feels like to be small:
And Thou know'st I cannot pray
To Thee in my father's way —
When Thou wast so little, say
Could'st Thou talk Thy Father's way? —
So, a little Child, come down
And hear a child's tongue like Thy own;
Take me by the hand and walk,
And listen to my baby-talk.
To Thy Father show my prayer
(He will look, Thou art so fair),
And say: "O Father, I, Thy Son,
Bring the prayer of a little one."

And He will smile, that children's tongue
Has not changed since Thou wast young!

Francis Thompson

THE JANITOR'S BOY *

Oh, I'm in love with the janitor's boy,
And the janitor's boy loves me;
He's going to hunt for a desert isle
In our geography.

* See Note 7.

A desert isle with spicy trees
  Somewhere near Sheepshead Bay;
A right nice place, just fit for two,
  Where we can live alway.

Oh, I'm in love with the janitor's boy,
  He's as busy as he can be;
And down in the cellar he's making a raft
  Out of an old settee.

He'll carry me off, I know that he will,
  For his hair is exceedingly red,
And the only thing that occurs to me
  Is to dutifully shiver in bed.

The day that we sail, I shall leave this brief note,
  For my parents I hate to annoy:
"I have flown away to an isle in the bay
  With the janitor's red-haired boy."

Nathalia Crane

THE DAY OF THE CIRCUS HORSE

It was a fiery circus horse
  That ramped and stamped and neighed,
Till every creature in its course
  Fled, frightened and dismayed.
The chickens on the roadway's edge
  Arose and flapped their wings,
And making for the sheltering hedge
  Flew off like crazy things.

Nor iron gates nor fences barred
  That mettled steed's career.
It galloped right across our yard
  And filled us all with fear;
And when it tossed its head and ran
  Straight through the pantry door,
Cook almost dropped her frying-pan
  Upon the kitchen floor!

It neighed and pranced and wheeled about
  And scampered off, but then
We scarcely saw the creature out
  When it was in again.
And so throughout the livelong day
  Through house and yard and street,
That charger held its fearsome way
  And only stopped to eat.

But when, at dusk, a little lame,
  It slowly climbed the stairs,
Behold! a gentle lady came
  And made it say its prayers.
Now, what a wondrous change you see!
  'Sh! Come and take a peep —
Here lies, as tame as tame can be,
  A little boy, asleep!

T. A. Daly

THE YOUNG MYSTIC

We sat together close and warm,
  My little tired boy and I —
  Watching across the evening sky
The coming of the storm.

No rumblings rose, no thunders crashed,
  The west-wind scarcely sang aloud;
  But from a huge and solid cloud
The summer lightnings flashed.

And then he whispered, " Father, watch;
  I think God's going to light His moon — "
  " And when, my boy " . . . " Oh, very soon.
I saw Him strike a match! "

Louis Untermeyer

THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS

At evening when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit;
They sit at home and talk and sing,
And do not play at anything.

Now, with my little gun, I crawl
All in the dark along the wall,
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

There, in the night, where none can spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie,
And play at books that I have read
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are my starry solitudes;
And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

So, when my nurse comes in for me,
Home I return across the sea,
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear land of story-books.

Robert Louis Stevenson

A RECOLLECTION

My father's friend came once to tea.
He laughed and talked. He spoke to me.
But in another week they said
That friendly pink-faced man was dead.

"How sad . . ." they said, "the best of men."
So said I too, "How sad"; but then
Deep in my heart I thought with pride,
"I know a person who has died!"

Frances Cornford

WHAT IS THE GRASS?

A child said What is the grass? fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.
I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropped,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we
may see and remark and say *Whose?*

Walt Whitman

HELGA

The wishes on this child's mouth
Came like snow on marsh cranberries;
The tamarack kept something for her;
The wind is ready to help her shoes.
The north has loved her; she will be
A grandmother feeding geese on frosty
Mornings; she will understand
Early snow on the cranberries
Better and better then.

Carl Sandburg

FOR ARVIA

(*On Her Fifth Birthday*)

You Eyes, you large and all-inquiring Eyes,
That look so dubiously into me,
And are not satisfied with what you see,
Tell me the worst and let us have no lies;
Tell me the secret of your scrutinies,
And of myself. Am I a Mystery?
Am I a Boojum — or just Company?
What do you say? What do you think, You Eyes?

You say not; but you think, beyond a doubt;
And you have the whole world to think about,
With very little time for little things.
So let it be; and let it all be fair —
For you, and for the rest who cannot share
Your gold of unrevealed awakenings.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

TIRED TIM

Poor tired Tim! It's sad for him.
He lags the long bright morning through,
Ever so tired of nothing to do;
He moons and mopes the livelong day,
Nothing to think about, nothing to say;
Up to bed with his candle to creep,
Too tired to yawn, too tired to sleep:
Poor tired Tim! It's sad for him.

Walter de la Mare

GODFREY GORDON GUSTAVUS GORE

Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore —
No doubt you have heard the name before —
Was a boy who never would shut a door!

The wind might whistle, the wind might roar,
And teeth be aching and throats be sore,
But still he never would shut the door.

His father would beg, his mother implore,
"Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore,
We really *do* wish you would shut the door!"

Their hands they wrung, their hair they tore;
But Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore
Was deaf as the buoy out at the Nore.

When he walked forth the folks would roar,
"Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore
Why don't you think to shut the door?"

They rigged out a Shutter with sail and oar,
And threatened to pack off Gustavus Gore
On a voyage of penance to Singapore.

But he begged for mercy, and said, "No more!
Pray do not send me to Singapore
On a Shutter, and then I will shut the door!"

"You will?" said his parents; "then keep on shore!
But mind you do! For the plague is sore
Of a fellow that never will shut the door,
Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore!"

William Brighty Rands

LEETLA GIUSEPPINA

Joe Baratta's Giuseppina
  She's so cute as she can be;
Justa com' here from Messina,
  Weeth da resta family.
Joe had money in da banka —
  He been savin' for a year —
An' he breeng hees wife, Bianca,
  An' da three small children here.

First ees baby, Catarina,
Nexta Paolo (w'at you call
Een da Inglaice langwadge "Paul"),
An' da smartest wan of all —
Giuseppina!

Giuseppina justa seven,
But so smart as she can be;
Wida-wake at night-time even,
Dere's so mooch dat's strange to see.
W'at you theenk ees mos' surprise her?
No; ees not da buildin's tall;
Eef, my frand, you would be wisa
You mus' theenk of som'theeng small.
Eet's an ant! W'en first she seena
Wan o' dem upon da ground,
How she laughed an' danced around:
"O! 'Formica,' he has found
Giuseppina!

"O!" she cried to heem, "Formica"
(Dat's Italian name for heem),
"How you getta here so queecka?
For I know you no can sweem;
An' you was not on da sheepa,
For I deed not see you dere.
How you evva mak' da treepa?
Only birds can fly een air.
How you gat here from Messina?
O! at las' I ondrastand!
You have dugga through da land
Jus' to find your leetla frand,
Giuseppina!" *T. A. Daly*

TO DICK, ON HIS SIXTH BIRTHDAY[1]

Tho' I am very old and wise,
  And you are neither wise nor old,
When I look far into your eyes,
  I know things I was never told:
I know how flame must strain and fret
Prisoned in a mortal net;
How joy with over-eager wings,
Bruises the small heart where he sings;
How too much life, like too much gold,
Is sometimes very hard to hold. . . .
All that is talking — but I know
This much is true, six years ago
An angel living near the moon
Walked thru the sky and sang a tune
Plucking stars to make his crown —
And suddenly two stars fell down,
Two falling arrows made of light.
Six years ago this very night
I saw them fall and wondered why
The angel dropped them from the sky —
But when I saw your eyes I knew
The angel sent the stars to you.

Sara Teasdale

[1] From *Rivers to the Sea* by Sara Teasdale. Copyright, 1915, by the Macmillan Company.

TEN YEARS OLD

A city child, rooms are to him no mere
Places to live in. Each one has a clear
Color and character of its own. His toys
And tumbled books made the small bed-room seem
The place to build a practicable dream.
He likes the brilliant parlor and enjoys
Nothing so much as bringing other boys
To romp among the delicate furniture,
And brush within an inch of ivories, lamps,
And other things not held by iron clamps,
Like Chinese vases, neatly insecure.
His father's library with its heavy tone
Seldom detains him, for he has his own.
He views the kitchen with a hungry eye
And loafs about it, nibbling on the stray
Dry crumbs of gossip that may drop his way,
Standing so innocently inattentive. Sly
And with a squirrel's curiosity,
Careless of barred or sacred corners, he
Hunts back of shelves until he finds the key
With which to open bureau-drawers and pry
Into forbidden desks and cupboards — there
Are scores of mysteries forbidden, new,
And so well hidden, they need looking through.
But most of all he likes the bath-room where
The panel mirror shows his four feet two,
Where, with a towel or bath-robe, he can strike
A hundred attitudes not only like
His printed heroes but the gods themselves.

Stripping himself he dreams and dances there,
The pink embodiment of Peter Pan.
Or changing to an older superman
He turns to Siegfried brandishing his sword
And Jason snatching at the Golden Fleece.
The figures crowd around him and increase:
Now he is David battling for the Lord,
Mixing his battle-cries with psalms of peace.
Now he is Mowgli, at the cobra's hoard
With black Bagheera. Swiftly he has drawn
Excalibur from its invisible sheath.
He is Ulysses on his native heath,
Tristram, Tom Sawyer and Bellerophon;
Cadmus about to sow the dragon's teeth;
The shining Parsifal who knew no sin;
Sir Launcelot and Huckleberry Finn;
George Washington and Captain Hook and Thor;
Hansel awaking in the magic wood;
Frank Merriwell, John Silver, Robin Hood —
He is all these and half a hundred more.
He scowls and strides, he utters harsh commands;
Great armies follow him to new-born lands,
Battling for treasures lost or glories gone.
None can withstand the thunder of his frown;
His eye is terrible; the walls go down.
Cries of the conquered mingle with the cheers.
While through the clash and battle-smoke he hears —
"Richard! Get through! And put your stockings on!"

Louis Untermeyer

SEUMAS BEG

A man was sitting underneath a tree
Outside the village, and he asked me what
Name was upon this place, and said that he
Was never here before. He told a lot
Of stories to me too. His nose was flat.
I asked him how it happened, and he said
The first mate of the Mary Ann done that
With a marlin-spike one day, but he was dead,
And jolly good job too; and he'd have gone
A long way to have killed him, and he had
A gold ring in one ear; the other one
"Was bit off by a crocodile, bedad."
That's what he said. He taught me how to chew.
He was a real nice man. He liked me, too.

James Stephens

MISS T.

It's a very odd thing —
  As odd as can be —
That whatever Miss T. eats
  Turns into Miss T.;
Porridge and apples,
  Mince, muffins and mutton,
Jam, junket, jumbles —
  Not a rap, not a button
It matters; the moment
  They're out of her plate,
Though shared by Miss Butcher
  And sour Mr. Bate;

Tiny and cheerful,
And neat as can be,
Whatever Miss T. eats
Turns into Miss T.

Walter de la Mare

MR. WELLS

On Sunday morning, then he comes
To church, and everybody smells
The blacking and the toilet soap
And camphor balls from Mr. Wells.

He wears his whiskers in a bunch,
And wears his glasses on his head.
I mustn't call him Old Man Wells —
No matter — that's what Father said.

And when the little blacking smells
And camphor balls and soap begin,
I do not have to look to know
That Mr. Wells is coming in.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

BILL PETERS

Bill Peters was a hustler
From Independence town;
He warn't a college scholar
Nor man of great renown,
But Bill had a way o' doin' things
An' doin' 'em up brown.

Bill druv the stage from Independence
Up to the Smokey Hill;
An' everybody knowed him thar
As Independence Bill —
Thar warn't no feller on the route
That druv with half the skill.

Bill druv four pair of horses,
Same as you'd drive a team,
An' you'd think you was a-travelin'
On a railroad druv by steam;
An' he'd git thar on time, you bet,
Or Bill 'ud bust a seam.

He carried mail an' passengers,
An' he started on the dot,
An' them teams o' his'n, so they say,
Was never known to trot;
But they went it in a gallop
An' kept their axles hot.

When Bill's stage 'ud bust a tire,
Or something 'ud break down,
He'd hustle round an' patch her up
An' start off with a bound;
An' the wheels o' that old shack o' his
Scarce ever touched the ground.

An' Bill didn't 'low no foolin',
An' when Injuns hove in sight,
An' bullets rattled at the stage,
He druv with all his might.
He'd holler, " Fellers, give 'em hell!
I ain't got time to fight."

Then the way them wheels 'ud rattle,
An' the way the dust 'ud fly,
You'd think a million cattle
Had stampeded an' gone by.
But the mail 'ud get thar just the same,
If the horses had to die!

He druv the stage for many a year
Along the Smokey Hill,
An' a pile o' wild Comanches
Did Bill Peters have to kill —
An' I reckon if he had got luck
He'd be a-drivin' still.

But he chanced one day to run agin
A bullet made o' lead,
Which was harder than he bargained for
An' now poor Bill is dead;
An' when they brung his body home
A barrel o' tears was shed.

American Cowboy Ballad
(Collected by John A. Lomax)

FATHER WILLIAM

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head —
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son,
"I feared it might injure the brain;
But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door —
Pray, what is the reason for that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his gray locks,
"I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of this ointment — one shilling the box —
Allow me to sell you a couple."

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak;
Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw,
Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose —
What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions and that is enough,"
Said his father; "don't give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs!"

Lewis Carroll

THE WATCHER

She always leaned to watch for us,
  Anxious if we were late,
In winter by the window,
  In summer by the gate;

And though we mocked her tenderly,
  Who had such foolish care,
The long way home would seem more safe
  Because she waited there.

Her thoughts were all so full of us,
  She never could forget!
And so I think that where she is
  She must be watching yet,

Waiting till we come home to her,
  Anxious if we are late —
Watching from Heaven's window,
  Leaning from Heaven's gate.

Margaret Widdemer

THE SHEPHERDESS

She walks — the lady of my delight —
  A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
  She guards them from the steep;
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
  And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
  Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
  The chastest stars may peep.
She walks — the lady of my delight —
  A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
  Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
  She has her soul to keep.
She walks — the lady of my delight —
  A shepherdess of sheep.

Alice Meynell

THE OLD LADY

The old, old lady
that nobody knows
sits in the garden
shelter and sews.

Save for her restless
fingers she
is cold and still
as ivory.

The chestnut-blossom
blown on her dress
seems only a sculptor's
cleverness.

Humbert Wolfe

THE LAST LEAF

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said —
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago —

That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
  In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
  Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
  In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
  At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
  Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
  In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
  Where I cling.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

THE RUNNER

On a flat road runs the well-train'd runner,
He is lean and sinewy with muscular legs,
He is thinly clothed, he leans forward as he runs,
With lightly closed fists and arms partially rais'd.

Walt Whitman

PORTRAIT BY A NEIGHBOR

Before she has her floor swept
  Or her dishes done,
Any day you'll find her
  A-sunning in the sun!

It's long after midnight
  Her key's in the lock,
And you never see her chimney smoke
  Till past ten o'clock.

She digs in her garden
  With a shovel and a spoon,
She weeds her lazy lettuce
  By the light of the moon,

She walks up the walk
  Like a woman in a dream,
She forgets she borrowed butter
  And pays you back cream!

Her lawn looks like a meadow,
  And if she mows the place
She leaves the clover standing
  And the Queen Anne's lace!

Edna St. Vincent Millay

IN PRAISE OF JOHNNY APPLESEED *

(Born 1775. Died 1847)

I. Over the Appalachian Barricade

To be read like old leaves on the elm tree of Time. Sifting soft winds with sentence and rhyme.

In the days of President Washington,
The glory of the nations,
Dust and ashes,
Snow and sleet,
And hay and oats and wheat,
Blew west,
Crossed the Appalachians,
Found the glades of rotting leaves, the soft deer-pastures,
The farms of the far-off future
In the forest.
Colts jumped the fence,
Snorting, ramping, snapping, sniffing,
With gastronomic calculations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
The east walls of our citadel,
And turned to gold-horned unicorns,
Feasting in the dim farms of the forest.
Stripedest, kickingest kittens escaped,
Caterwauling " Yankee Doodle Dandy,"
Renounced their poor relations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
And turned to tiny tigers
In the humorous forest.
Chickens escaped
From farmyard congregations
Crossed the Appalachians,

* See Note 8.

And turned to amber trumpets
On the ramparts of our Hoosiers' nest and citadel,
Millennial heralds
Of the foggy, mazy forest.
Pigs broke loose, scrambled west,
Scorned their loathsome stations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
Turned to roaming, foaming wild boars
Of the forest.
The smallest, blindest puppies toddled west
While their eyes were coming open,
And, with misty observations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
Barked, barked, barked
At the glow-worms and the marsh lights and the lightning-bugs,
And turned to ravening wolves
Of the forest.
Crazy parrots and canaries flew west,
Drunk on May-time revelations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
And turned to delirious, flower-dressed fairies
Of the lazy forest.
Haughtiest swans and peacocks swept west,
And, despite soft derivations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
And turned to blazing warrior souls
Of the forest,
Singing the ways
Of the Ancient of Days.
And the "Old Continentals
In their ragged regimentals,"
With bard's imaginations,

Crossed the Appalachians.
And
A boy
Blew west
And with prayers and incantations,
And with "Yankee Doodle Dandy,"
Crossed the Appalachians,
And was "young John Chapman,"
Then
"Johnny Appleseed, Johnny Appleseed,"
Chief of the fastnesses, dappled and vast,
In a pack on his back,
In a deer-hide sack,
The beautiful orchards of the past,
The ghosts of all the forests and the groves —
In that pack on his back,
In that talisman sack,
To-morrow's peaches, pears and cherries,
To-morrow's grapes and red raspberries,
Seeds and tree souls, precious things,
Feathered with microscopic wings,
All the outdoors the child heart knows,
And the apple, green, red, and white,
Sun of his day and his night —
The apple allied to the thorn,
Child of the rose.
Porches untrod of forest houses
All before him, all day long,
"Yankee Doodle" his marching song;
And the evening breeze
Joined his psalms of praise
As he sang the ways
Of the Ancient of Days.

Leaving behind august Virginia,
Proud Massachusetts, and proud Maine,
Planting the trees that would march and train
On, in his name to the great Pacific,
Like Birnam wood to Dunsinane,
Johnny Appleseed swept on,
Every shackle gone,
Loving every sloshy brake,
Loving every skunk and snake,
Loving every leathery weed,
Johnny Appleseed, Johnny Appleseed,
Master and ruler of the unicorn-ramping forest,
The tiger-mewing forest,
The rooster-trumpeting, boar-foaming, wolf-ravening forest,
The spirit-haunted, fairy-enchanted forest,
Stupendous and endless,
Searching its perilous ways
In the name of the Ancient of Days.

II. The Indians Worship Him, but He Hurries On

Painted kings in the midst of the clearing
Heard him asking his friends the eagles
To guard each planted seed and seedling.
Then he was a god, to the red man's dreaming;
Then the chiefs brought treasures grotesque and fair, —
Magical trinkets and pipes and guns,
Beads and furs from their medicine-lair, —
Stuck holy feathers in his hair,
Hailed him with austere delight,
The orchard god was their guest through the night.

While the late snow blew from bleak Lake Erie,
Scourging rock and river and reed,
All night long they made great medicine
For Jonathan Chapman,
Johnny Appleseed,
Johnny Appleseed;
And as though his heart were a wind-blown wheatsheaf,
As though his heart were a new-built nest,
As though their heaven house were his breast,
In swept the snow-birds singing glory.
And I hear his bird heart beat its story,
Hear yet how the ghost of the forest shivers,
Hear yet the cry of the gray, old orchards,
Dim and decaying by the rivers,
And the timid wings of the bird-ghosts beating,
And the ghosts of the tom-toms beating, beating.

While you read, hear the hoof-beats of deer in the snow. And see, by their track, bleeding foot-prints we know.

But he left their wigwams and their love.
By the hour of dawn he was proud and
stark,
Kissed the Indian babes with a sigh,
Went forth to live on roots and bark,
Sleep in the trees, while the years howled by —

Calling the catamounts by name,
And buffalo bulls no hand could tame,
Slaying never a living creature,
Joining the birds in every game,
With the gorgeous turkey gobblers mocking,
With the lean-necked eagles boxing and shouting;
Sticking their feathers in his hair, —
Turkey feathers,
Eagle feathers, —

Trading hearts with all beasts and weathers
He swept on, winged and wonder-crested,
Bare-armed, barefooted, and bare-breasted.

The maples, shedding their spinning seeds,
Called to his appleseeds in the ground,
Vast chestnut-trees, with their butterfly nations,
Called to his seeds without a sound.
And the chipmunk turned a "summerset,"
And the foxes danced the Virginia reel;
Hawthorn and crab-thorn bent, rain-wet,
And dropped their flowers in his night-black hair;
And the soft fawns stopped for his perorations;
And his black eyes shone through the forest-gleam,
And he plunged young hands into new-turned earth,
And prayed dear orchard boughs into birth;
And he ran with the rabbit and slept with the stream.
And so for us he made great medicine,
And so for us he made great medicine,
In the days of President Washington.

While you read,
see conventions
of deer go by.
The bucks toss
their horns, the
fuzzy fawns fly.

III. Johnny Appleseed's Old Age

Long, long after,
When settlers put up beam and rafter,
They asked of the birds: "Who gave this fruit?
Who watched this fence till the seeds took root?
Who gave these boughs?" They asked the sky,
And there was no reply.

To be read like
faint hoof-beats
of fawns long
gone.
From respectable
pasture, and
park and lawn,
And heart-beats
of fawns that
are coming again
When the for-
est, once more,
is the master of
men.

But the robin might have said,
"To the farthest West he has followed the sun,
His life and his empire just begun."

Self-scourged, like a monk, with a throne for wages,
Stripped like the iron-souled Hindu sages,
Draped like a statue, in strings like a scarecrow,
His helmet-hat an old tin pan,
But worn in the love of the heart of man,
Hairy Ainu, wild man of Borneo, Robinson Crusoe —
Johnny Appleseed;
And the robin might have said,
"Sowing, he goes to the far, new West,
With the apple, the sun of his burning breast —
The apple allied to the thorn,
Child of the rose."

Washington buried in Virginia,
Jackson buried in Tennessee,
Young Lincoln, brooding in Illinois,
And Johnny Appleseed, priestly and free,
Knotted and gnarled, past seventy years,
Still planted on in the woods alone.
Ohio and young Indiana —
These were his wide altar-stone,
Where still he burnt out flesh and bone.

Twenty days ahead of the Indian, twenty years ahead of the white man,
At last the Indian overtook him, at last the Indian hurried past him;
At last the white man overtook him, at last the white man hurried past him;

At last his own trees overtook him, at last his own trees
hurried past him.
Many cats were tame again,
Many ponies tame again,
Many pigs were tame again,
Many canaries tame again;
And the real frontier was his sun-burnt breast.

From the fiery core of that apple, the earth,
Sprang apple-amaranths divine.
Love's orchards climbed to the heavens of the West,
And snowed the earthly sod with flowers.
Farm hands from the terraces of the blest
Danced on the mists with their ladies fine
And Johnny Appleseed laughed with his dreams,
And swam once more the ice-cold streams.

And the doves of the spirit swept through the hours,
With doom-calls, love-calls, death-calls, dream-calls;
And Johnny Appleseed, all that year,
Lifted his hands to the farm-filled sky,
To the apple-harvesters busy on high;
And so once more his youth began,
And so for us he made great medicine —
Johnny Appleseed, medicine-man.

Then
The sun was his turned-up broken barrel,
Out of which his juicy apples rolled,
Down the repeated terraces,
Thumping across the gold,
An angel in each apple that touched the forest mold,
A ballot-box in each apple,
A state capital in each apple,

Great high schools, great colleges,
All America in each apple,
Each red, rich, round, and bouncing moon
That touched the forest mold.
Like scrolls and rolled-up flags of silk,
He saw the fruits unfold,
And all our expectations in one wild-flower written dream,
Confusion and death-sweetness, and a thicket of crab-thorns,
Heart of a hundred midnights, heart of the merciful morns.
Heaven's boughs bent down with their alchemy,
Perfumed airs, and thoughts of wonder.
And the dew on the grass and his own cold tears
Were one in brooding mystery,
Though death's loud thunder came upon him,
Though death's loud thunder struck him down —
The boughs and the proud thoughts swept through the thunder,
Till he saw our wide nation, each State a flower,
Each petal a park for holy feet,
With wild fawns merry on every street,
With wild fawns merry on every street,
The vista of ten thousand years, flower-lighted and complete.

Hear the lazy weeds murmuring, bays and rivers whispering,
From Michigan to Texas, California to Maine;
Listen to the eagles, screaming, calling,
" Johnny Appleseed, Johnny Appleseed,"
There by the doors of old Fort Wayne.

In the four-poster bed Johnny Appleseed built,
Autumn rains were the curtains, autumn leaves were the quilt.
He laid him down sweetly, and slept through the night,
Like a bump on a log, like a stone washed white,
There by the doors of old Fort Wayne.

Vachel Lindsay

CAT'S MEAT

BIRDS AND BEASTS

THE KERRY COW

THE RUNAWAY *

Once, when the snow of the year was beginning to fall,
We stopped by a mountain pasture to say "Whose colt?"
A little Morgan had one forefoot on the wall,
The other curled at his breast. He dipped his head
And snorted to us. And then he had to bolt.
We heard the miniature thunder where he fled
And we saw him or thought we saw him dim and gray,
Like a shadow against the curtain of falling flakes.
"I think the little fellow's afraid of the snow.
He isn't winter-broken. It isn't play
With the little fellow at all. He's running away.
I doubt if even his mother could tell him, 'Sakes,
It's only weather.' He'd think she didn't know.
Where is his mother? He can't be out alone."
And now he comes again with a clatter of stone
And mounts the wall again with whited eyes
And all his tail that isn't hair up straight.
He shudders his coat as if to throw off flies.
"Whoever it is that leaves him out so late,
When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,
Ought to be told to come and take him in."

Robert Frost

* See Note 9.

THE RABBIT

When they said the time to hide was mine,
I hid back under a thick grape vine.

And while I was still for the time to pass,
A little gray thing came out of the grass.

He hopped his way through the melon bed
And sat down close by a cabbage head.

He sat down close where I could see,
And his big still eyes looked hard at me,

His big eyes bursting out of the rim,
And I looked back very hard at him.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

THE KERRY COW

It's in Connacht in Munster that yourself might travel wide,
And be asking all the herds you'd meet along the countryside,
But you'd never meet a one could show the likes of her till now,
Where she's grazing in a Leinster field — my little Kerry cow.

If herself went to the cattle fairs she'd put all cows to shame,
For the finest poets of the land would meet to sing her fame;

And the young girls would be asking leave to stroke her satin coat,
They'd be praising and caressing her, and calling her a dote.

If the King of Spain gets news of her he'll fill his purse with gold,
And set sail to ask the English King where she is to be sold.
But the King of Spain may come to me, a crown upon his brow.
It is he may keep his golden purse — and I my Kerry cow.

The priest maybe will tell her fame to the Holy Pope of Rome,
And the Cardinals' College send for her to leave her Irish home;
But it's heart-broke she would be itself to cross the Irish sea,
'Twould be best they'd send a blessing to my Kerry cow and me.

When the Ulster men hear tell of her, they'll come with swords an' pikes,
For it's civil war there'll be no less if they should see her likes,
And you'll read it on the paper of the bloody fight there's been,
An' the Orangemen they're burying in fields of Leinster green.

There are red cows that's contrary, and there's white cows quare and wild,
But my Kerry cow is biddable, an' gentle as a child.

You may rare up kings and heroes on the lovely milk she yields,
For she's fit to foster generals to fight our battlefields.

In the histories they'll be making they've a right to put her name
With the horse of Troy and Oisin's hounds and other beasts of fame.
And the painters will be painting her beneath the hawthorn bough
Where she's grazing on the good green grass — my little Kerry cow.

W. M. Letts

A COW AT SULLINGTON

She leaves the puddle where she drinks,
And comes toward the roadway bar
And looks into our eyes, and thinks
What curious animals we are!

Charles Dalmon

THE MOCKING-BIRD

Hear! hear! hear!
Listen! the word
Of the mocking-bird!
Hear! hear! hear!
I will make all clear;
I will let you know
Where the footfalls go

That through the thicket and over the hill
Allure, allure.
How the bird-voice cleaves
Through the weft of leaves
With a leap and a thrill
Like the flash of a weaver's shuttle, swift and sudden and sure!

And lo, he is gone — even while I turn
The wisdom of his runes to learn.
He knows the mystery of the wood,
The secret of the solitude;
But he will not tell, he will not tell,
For all he promises so well.

Richard Hovey

THE BLACKBIRD

The nightingale has a lyre of gold,
The lark's is a clarion call,
And the blackbird plays but a boxwood flute,
But I love him best of all.

For his song is all of the joy of life,
And we in the mad, spring weather,
We two have listened till he sang
Our hearts and lips together.

W. E. Henley

COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO!

My neighbor has a herd, my neighbor has a flock,
But I have a barn with a gilt weathercock.

I have no horses, I have no hay,
But I have a weathercock, gilt and gay.

My neighbor has a flock, my neighbor has a herd,
But I have a beautiful bright tin bird.

And when I am dead, this will be said:
He had a weathercock on his shed;
He had no herd, he had no flock,
But he had a barn with a gilt weathercock;
He had no horses, he had no hay,
But he had a weathercock, gilt and gay;
His neighbor had a flock, his neighbor had a herd,
But he had a beautiful bright tin bird!

Richard Kirk

THE KINGFISHER

It was the Rainbow gave thee birth,
And left thee all her lovely hues;
And, as her mother's name was Tears,
So runs it in thy blood to choose
For haunts the lonely pools, and keep
In company with trees that weep.

Go you and, with such glorious hues,
Live with proud Peacocks in green parks;
On lawns as smooth as shining glass,
Let every feather show its mark;
Get thee on boughs and clap thy wings
Before the windows of proud kings.

Nay, lovely Bird, thou art not vain;
Thou hast no proud ambitious mind;
I also love a quiet place
That's green, away from all mankind;
A lonely pool, and let a tree
Sigh with her bosom over me.

W. H. Davies

CHICKADEE [1]

The chickadee in the appletree
Talks all the time very gently.
He makes me sleepy.
I rock away to the sea-lights.
Far off I hear him talking
The way smooth bright pebbles
Drop into water . . .
Chick-a-*dee-dee-dee*. . . .

Hilda Conkling
(*Written at the age of six*)

TWO SPARROWS

Two sparrows, feeding,
heard a thrush
sing to the dawn.
The first said "Tush!

"In all my life
I never heard
a more affected
singing-bird."

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Poems by a Little Girl* by Hilda Conkling. Copyright, 1920, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

The second said
"It's you and me,
who slave to keep
the likes of he."

"And if we cared,"
both sparrows said,
"we'd do that singing
on our head."

The thrush pecked sideways,
and was dumb.
"And now," they screamed,
"he's pinched our crumb!"

Humbert Wolfe

FIREFLIES

Little lamps of the dusk,
  You fly low and gold
When the summer evening
  Starts to unfold,
So that all the insects,
  Now, before you pass,
Will have light to see by
  Undressing in the grass.

But when night has flowered,
  Little lamps a-gleam,
You fly over tree-tops
  Following a dream.

Men wonder from their windows
That a firefly goes so far —
They do not know your longing
To be a shooting star.

Carolyn Hall

DOLPHINS IN BLUE WATER *

Hey! Crackerjack — jump!
Blue water,
Pink water,
Swirl, flick, flitter;
Snout into a wave-trough,
Plunge, curl.
Bow over,
Under,
Razor-cut and tumble.
Roll, turn —
Straight — and shoot at the sky,
All rose-flame drippings.
Down ring,
Drop,
Nose under,
Hoop,
Tail,
Dive,
And gone;
With smooth over-swirlings of blue water,
Oil-smooth cobalt,
Slipping, liquid lapis lazuli,

* See Note 10.

Emerald shadings,
Tintings of pink and ochre.
Prismatic slidings
Underneath a windy sky.

Amy Lowell

CAT'S MEAT

Ho, all you cats in all the street;
Look out, it is the hour of meat:

The little barrow is crawling along,
And the meat-boy growling his fleshy song.

Hurry, Ginger! Hurry, White!
Don't delay to court or fight.

Wandering Tabby, vagrant Black,
Yamble from adventure back!

Slip across the shining street,
Meat! Meat! Meat! Meat!

Lift your tail and dip your feet;
Find your penny — Meat! Meat!

Where's your mistress; learn to purr:
Pennies emanate from her.

Be to her, for she is Fate,
Perfectly affectionate.

(You, domestic Pinkie-Nose,
Keep inside and warm your toes.)

Flurry, flurry in the street —
Meat! Meat! Meat! Meat!

Harold Monro

AT NIGHT

On moony nights the dogs bark shrill
Down the valley and up the hill.

There's one is angry to behold
The moon so unafraid and cold,
Who makes the earth as bright as day,
But yet unhappy, dead, and gray.

Another in his strawy lair
Says: "Who's a-howling over there?
By heavens, I will stop him soon
From interfering with the moon!"

So back he barks, with throat upthrown:
"You leave our moon, our moon alone!"
And other distant dogs respond
Beyond the fields, beyond, beyond. . . .

Frances Cornford

THE GRASSHOPPER [1]

The Grasshopper, the Grasshopper,
I will explain to you: —
He is the Brownies' racehorse,
The fairies' Kangaroo.

Vachel Lindsay

[1] From *The Congo and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay. Copyright, 1914, by The Macmillan Company.

CHANTICLEER

Of all the birds from East to West
That tuneful are and dear,
I love that farmyard bird the best,
They call him Chanticleer.

Gold plume and copper plume,
Comb of scarlet gay;
'Tis he that scatters night and gloom,
And whistles back the day!

He is the sun's brave herald
That, ringing his blithe horn,
Calls round a world dew-pearled
The heavenly airs of morn.

O clear gold, shrill and bold!
He calls through creeping mist
The mountains from the night and cold
To rose and amethyst.

He sets the birds to singing,
And calls the flowers to rise;
The morning cometh, bringing
Sweet sleep to heavy eyes.

Gold plume and silver plume,
Comb of coral gay;
'Tis he packs off the night and gloom,
And summons home the day!

Black fear he sends it flying,
  Black care he drives afar;
And creeping shadows sighing
  Before the morning star.

The birds of all the forest
  Have dear and pleasant cheer,
But yet I hold the rarest
  The farmyard Chanticleer.

Red cock or black cock,
  Gold cock or white,
The flower of all the feathered flock;
  He whistles back the light!

Katharine Tynan

RED ROOSTER [1]

Red rooster in your gray coop,
O stately creature with tail-feathers red and blue,
Yellow and black,
You have a comb gay as a parade
On your head:
You have pearl trinkets
On your feet:
The short feathers smooth along your back
Are the dark color of wet rocks,
Or the rippled green of ships
When I look at their sides through water.

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Poems by a Little Girl* by Hilda Conkling. Copyright, 1920, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

I don't know how you happened to be made
So proud, so foolish,
Wearing your coat of many colors,
Shouting all day long your crooked words,
Loud . . . sharp . . . not beautiful!

Hilda Conkling

(*Written at the age of seven*)

THE HENS

The night was coming very fast;
It reached the gate as I ran past.

The pigeons had gone to the tower of the church
And all the hens were on their perch,

Up in the barn, and I thought I heard
A piece of a little purring word.

I stopped inside, waiting and staying,
To try to hear what the hens were saying.

They were asking something, that was plain,
Asking it over and over again.

One of them moved and turned around,
Her feathers made a ruffled sound,

A ruffled sound, like a bushful of birds,
And she said her little asking words.

She pushed her head close into her wing,
But nothing answered anything.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

FAIRIES AND PHANTOMS

LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE

THE FAIRIES

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
  For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore
  Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
  Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
  Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
  All night awake.

High on the hill-top
  The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray,
  He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
  Columbkill he crosses
On his stately journeys
  From Slieveleague to Rosses;

Or going up with music
  On cold, starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
  Of the gay Northern Lights.
They stole little Bridget
  For seven years long;
When she came down again
  Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
  Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
  But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
  Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag leaves,
  Watching till she wake.

By the craggy hill-side,
  Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
  For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
  As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
  In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
  For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather! *William Allingham*

THE FAIRIES

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!
It's not so very, very far away;
You pass the gardener's shed and you just keep straight ahead —
I do so hope they've really come to stay.
There's a little wood, with moss in it and beetles,
And a little stream that quietly runs through;
You wouldn't think they'd dare to come merry-making there —
Well, they do.

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!
They often have a dance on summer nights;
The butterflies and bees make a lovely little breeze,
And the rabbits stand about and hold the lights.
Did you know that they could sit upon the moonbeams
And pick a little star to make a fan,
And dance away up there in the middle of the air?
Well, they can.

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!
You cannot think how beautiful they are;
They all stand up and sing when the Fairy Queen and King
Come gently floating down upon their car.
The King is very proud and *very* handsome;
The Queen — now can you guess who that could be
(She's a little girl all day, but at night she steals away)?
Well — it's Me!

Rose Fyleman

FAIRY–MUSIC

When fiddlers play their tunes, you may sometimes hear,
Very softly chiming in, magically clear,
Magically high and sweet, the tiny crystal notes
Of fairy voices bubbling free from tiny fairy throats.

When the birds at break of day chant their morning prayers,
Or on sunny afternoons pipe ecstatic airs,
Comes an added rush of sound to the silver din —
Songs of fairy troubadours gaily joining in.

When athwart the drowsy fields summer twilight falls,
Through the tranquil air there float elfin madrigals,
And in wild November nights, on the winds astride,
Fairy hosts go rushing by, singing as they ride.

Every dream that mortals dream, sleeping or awake,
Every lovely fragile hope — these the fairies take,
Delicately fashion them and give them back again
In tender, limpid melodies that charm the hearts of men.

Rose Fyleman

I'D LOVE TO BE A FAIRY'S CHILD

Children born of fairy stock
Never need for shirt or frock,
Never want for food or fire,
Always get their heart's desire:
Jingle pockets full of gold,
Marry when they're seven years old.

Every fairy child may keep
Two strong ponies and ten sheep;
All have houses, each his own,
Built of brick or granite stone;
They live on cherries; they run wild —
I'd love to be a Fairy's child.

Robert Graves

SUPPOSE

Suppose . . . and suppose that a wild little Horse of Magic
Came cantering out of the sky,
With bridle of silver and into the saddle I mounted
To fly — and to fly.

And we stretched up into the air, fleeting on in the sunshine,
A speck in the gleam
On galloping hoofs, his mane in the wind out-flowing,
As if in a dream.

Suppose and suppose, when the gentle star of evening
Came crinkling into the blue,
A magical castle we saw in the air, like a cloud of moonlight,
As onward we flew.

And across the green moat on the drawbridge we foamed and we snorted,
And there was a beautiful Queen
Who smiled at me strangely; and spoke to my wild little Horse, too —
A lovely and beautiful Queen.

Suppose and suppose she cried to her delicate maidens,
"Behold my daughter — my dear!"
And they crowned me with flowers, and then on their harps
sate playing,
Solemn and clear.

And magical cakes and goblets were spread on the table;
And at the window the birds came in;
Hopping along with bright eyes, pecking crumbs from the
platters,
And sipped of the wine.

And splashing up — up to the roof, tossed fountains of
crystal;
And Princes in scarlet and green
Shot with their bows and arrows, and kneeled with their
dishes
Of fruits for the Queen.

And we walked in a magical garden with rivers and bowers,
And my bed was of ivory and gold;
And the Queen breathed soft in my ear a song of en-
chantment,
And I never grew old . . .

And I never, never came back to the earth, oh, never and
never;
How mother would cry and cry.
There'd be snow on the fields then, and all these sweet
flowers in the winter
Would wither and die . . .

Suppose . . . and suppose . . .

Walter de la Mare

THE SHADOW PEOPLE

Old lame Bridget doesn't hear
Fairy music in the grass
When the gloaming's on the mere
And the shadow people pass;
Never hears their slow, grey feet
Coming from the village street
Just beyond the parson's wall,
Where the clover globes are sweet
And the mushroom's parasol
Opens in the moonlit rain.
Every night I hear them call
From their long and merry train.
Old lame Bridget says to me,
"It is just your fancy, child."
She cannot believe I see
Laughing faces in the wild,
Hands that twinkle in the sedge
Where the finny minnows quiver,
Shaping on a blue wave's ledge
Bubble foam to sail the river.
And the sunny hands to me
Beckon ever, beckon ever.
Oh! I would be wild and free
And with the shadow people be.

Francis Ledwidge

THE SATYRS AND THE MOON

Within the wood behind the hill
The moon got tangled in the trees.
Her splendor made the branches thrill
And thrilled the breeze.

The satyrs [1] in the grotto bent
Their heads to see the wondrous sight.
"It is a god in banishment
That stirs the night!"

The little satyr looked and guessed:
"It is an apple that one sees,
Brought from that garden of the West,
Hesperides."

"It is a cyclops' [2] glaring eye."
"A temple dome from Babylon."
"A Titan's cup of victory."
"A little sun."

The tiny satyr jumped for joy,
And kicked his hoofs in utmost glee.
"It is a wondrous silver toy —
Bring it to me!"

A great wind whistled through the blue
And caught the moon and tossed it high;
A bubble of pale fire it flew
Across the sky.

The satyrs gasped and looked and smiled,
And wagged their heads from side to side,
Except their shaggy little child,
Who cried and cried.

Herbert S. Gorman

[1] satyrs = fabled creatures, the upper half being the body of a man, the lower half being that of a goat.

[2] cyclops = in ancient mythology, a giant with one eye in the middle of the forehead.

DISENCHANTMENT *

Here is the German
  Fairy forest;
And here I turn in,
  I, the poorest
Son of an aging
  Humble widow.
The light is fading;
  Every shadow
Conceals a kobold,
  A gnome's dark eye,
Or even some troubled
  Loreley.
A ruined castle
  Invites me to prowl;
Its only vassal
  A frightened owl
(Most likely a princess
  Under a spell) —
And what light dances
  Behind that well?
Perhaps great riches
  Are hidden there,
Perhaps a witch's
  Magic snare.
I walk up boldly,
  Though my breath falters;
But no one holds me,
  Nothing alters
Except the dying
  Phosphorescence

* See Note 11.

Where the rocks lie in
  Broken crescents.
These rocks are haunted
  Everyone says,
And here the enchanted
  Dragon obeys
Only the youngest
  Son of a widow
Who waits the longest,
  Fearing no shadow
Of any uncommon
  Phantom in metal,
But dares to summon
  The Thing to battle.
I've said my vespers,
  I've tightened my gloves;
The forest whispers
  And chuckles and moves.
Darker and closer
  The stillness surges —
Not even the ghost of
  A rabbit emerges.
I rattle my weapons,
  I call and I call . . .
But nothing happens,
  Nothing at all.

  Nothing at all.

Louis Untermeyer

THE ELF AND THE DORMOUSE

Under a toadstool
  Crept a wee Elf,
Out of the rain
  To shelter himself.

Under the toadstool,
  Sound asleep,
Sat a big Dormouse
  All in a heap.

Trembled the wee Elf,
  Frightened, and yet
Fearing to fly away
  Lest he got wet.

To the next shelter —
  Maybe a mile!
Sudden the wee Elf
  Smiled a wee smile.

Tugged till the toadstool
  Toppled in two.
Holding it over him,
  Gaily he flew.

Soon he was safe home,
  Dry as could be.
Soon woke the Dormouse —
  "Good gracious me!

"Where is my toadstool?"
  Loud he lamented.
And that's how umbrellas
  First were invented.

Oliver Herford

LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE[1]

Little Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,
An' wash the cups and saucers up, an' brush the crumbs away,
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth, an' sweep,
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board-an'-keep;
An' all us other children, when the supper things is done,
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A-lis'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

Onc't they was a little boy wouldn't say his pray'rs —
An' when he went to bed at night, away up stairs,
His mammy heerd him holler, an' his daddy heerd him bawl,
An' when they turn't the kivvers down, he wasn't there at all!
An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an' press,

[1] From *Rhymes of Childhood* by James Whitcomb Riley. Copyright, 1890. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

An' seeked him up the chimney-flue, an' ever'wheres, I guess;
But all they ever found was thist his pants an' round-about!
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh an' grin,
An' make fun of ever'one, an' all her blood-an'-kin;
An' onc't when they was "company," an' ole folks was there,
She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't care!
An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an' hide,
They was two great big Black Things a-standin' by her side,
An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed what she's about!
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,
An' the lampwick sputters, an' the wind goes woo-oo!
An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,
An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is all squenched away,—
You better mind yer parents, and yer teachers fond and dear,
An' cherish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,

An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
Er the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

James Whitcomb Riley

ADVENTURE

Black wave the trees in the forest
And a rough wind hurries by,
But the swineherd's toddling daughter
Knows where fallen pine-cones lie.

And girt in a snowy apron
She scampers, alert and gay,
To the hidden pool in the hollow
Where the wan witch people play.

They smile, the wee wrinkled women,
They creep to her pinafore;
And lay in her lap strange treasures
Trolls brought from the ocean's floor.

And they marvel at her blonde tresses
And braid them with scented fern;
And they lave her dusty, brown ankles
With snow water from the burn.

But nobody listens, or heeds them,
The swineherd hews a new trail,
The swineherd's wife in the cottage
Pours the sour milk from the pail.

And little Gerta lags homeward
  Dream shod through the shadows deep;
Her eyelids heavy with wonder —
  They whisper, " She's been asleep."

Laura Benét

WORDS AND MUSIC

D·C·M

*WORDS AND MUSIC**

ODE

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying,
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself with our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy

* See Note 12.

TO HELEN

Helen, thy beauty is to me
  Like those Nicaean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
  The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
  To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
  Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
  To the glory that was Greece
  And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
  How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
  Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
  Are Holy Land!

Edgar Allan Poe

A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird
  Whose nest is in a watered shoot; [1]
My heart is like an apple tree
  Whose boughs are bent with thickest fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
  That paddles in a halcyon sea —
My heart is gladder than all these,
  Because my love is come to me.

[1] *Watered shoot* — a young branch which shoots out from the larger boughs.

Raise me a dais of silk and down,
Hang it with vair [1] and purple dyes,
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys,
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

SONG

"Oh! Love," they said, "is King of Kings,
And Triumph is his crown.
Earth fades in flame before his wings,
And Sun and Moon bow down."—
But that, I knew, would never do;
And Heaven is all too high.
So whenever I meet a Queen, I said,
I will not catch her eye.

"Oh! Love," they said, and "Love," they said,
"The gift of Love is this;
A crown of thorns about thy head,
And vinegar to thy kiss!"—
But Tragedy is not for me;
And I'm content to be gay.
So whenever I spied a Tragic Lady,
I went another way.

And so I never feared to see
You wander down the street,

[1] *Vair* — variegated silver and blue.

Or come across the fields to me
On ordinary feet.
For what they'd never told me of,
And what I never knew;
It was that all the time, my love,
Love would be merely you.

Rupert Brooke

"THE NIGHT WILL NEVER STAY"[1]

The night will never stay,
The night will still go by,
Though with a million stars
You pin it to the sky,
Though you bind it with the blowing wind
And buckle it with the moon,
The night will slip away
Like sorrow or a tune.

Eleanor Farjeon

HOW MANY TIMES

How many times do I love thee, dear?
Tell me how many thoughts there be
In the atmosphere
Of a new-fall'n year,
Whose white and sable hours appear
The latest flake of Eternity;
So many times do I love thee, dear.

[1] By permission from *Gypsy and Ginger* by Eleanor Farjeon. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Company.

How many times do I love, again?
Tell me how many beads there are
In a silver chain
Of the evening rain,
Unravelled from the tumbling main,
And threading the eye of a yellow star:
So many times do I love again.

Thomas Lovell Beddoes

BLOW, BUGLE, BLOW

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Alfred Tennyson

FOR THEM ALL

At night through the city in a song
Like a cloud I drift along.

I slip into the shop-girl's room,
Soothing her eyes amid the gloom.

I smooth the wrinkles on the cheek
Of the white mother, worn and meek.

Where the laborer sits at rest,
I pour sweet dreams into his breast.

The old man and the little child
Bending o'er the page have smiled.

Into the lover's heart I stream,
Like the belovèd in a dream.

The poet and the lover, too,
I drench with beauty through and through.

I am Beauty's, and I move
Lonely amid those I love.

O, poet, lover, mother, child!
For love of you my heart is wild.

Out of this very page I cry
Up to your spirits: this is I!

Are we together here at last?
O catch me up before 'tis past!

O hold me close against your breast!
There alone, at last, I rest.

John Hall Wheelock

THE WORDS

Little Words that wear silk dresses
And go to tea-parties:
"How darling!" "How perfectly dear!"
"You really did? . . . Marvelous!"
When they come away,
They take off their little silk mittens
And fold up their poke bonnets.
Then they are pansies and violets.
And some carry fragrance
Of mignonette in their pockets.

Out in the world are their cousins:

Tall Words that rise up like towers.
Slender Words ticking the hours.
Feather Words that mount seeds
In the flower pods.
Weather Words that count beads
On the hour-rods.
Merry Words that muse.
Tarry Words that lose.
Cloudy Words that send the rain.
Rowdy Words that tend a pain.
Linnet Words that seek a rare clime.
Minute Words that keep a fair time.
Morning Words that comb the hair high.
Adorning Words that roam the air nigh.
Wing Words that sing the little loves.
Spring Words that bring the little doves.
Mother Words that string the lyre.
Brother Words that bring the fire.

Willow Words that bind the nest.
Pillow Words that find a rest.
Long Words that bird the sleep.
Song Words that herd the sheep.
And when the fair "Good Night" is said,
Some Words climb the stair
And rhyme in turn to bed.

Opal Whiteley

LIGHT

The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.

F. W. Bourdillon

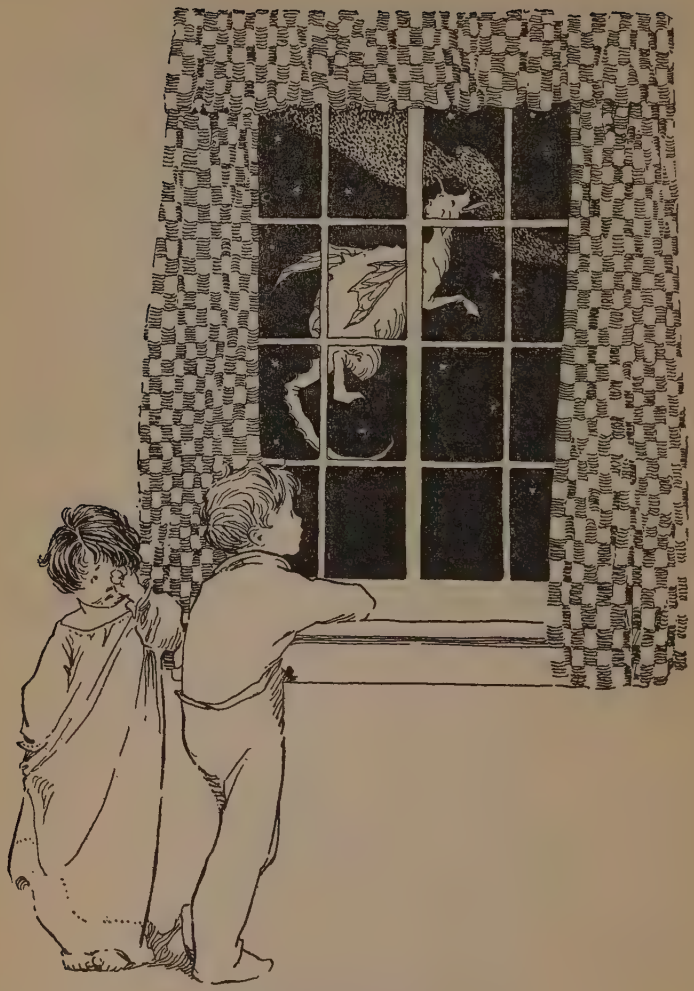
THE SINGER

If I had peace to sit and sing,
Then I could make a lovely thing;
But I am stung with goads and whips,
So I build songs like iron ships.

Let it be something for my song,
If it is sometimes swift and strong.

Anna Wickham

WHIMS AND FANTASIES



YET GENTLE WILL THE GRIFFIN BE

FOUR MOON POEMS[1]

Euclid

Old Euclid drew a circle
On a sand-beach long ago.
He bounded and enclosed it
With angles thus and so.
His set of solemn greybeards
Nodded and argued much
Of arc and of circumference,
Diameter and such.
A silent child stood by them
From morning until noon
Because they drew such charming
Round pictures of the moon.

What the Rattlesnake Said

The moon's a little prairie-dog.
He shivers through the night.
He sits upon his hill and cries
For fear that I will bite.

The sun's a broncho. He's afraid
Like every other thing,
And trembles, morning, noon and night,
Lest I should spring, and sting!

[1] From *The Congo and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay. Copyright, 1914, by the Macmillan Company.

The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky

(*What the Little Girl Said*)

The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky.
He bites it, day by day,
Until there's but a rim of scraps
That crumble all away.

The South Wind is a baker,
He kneads clouds in his den,
And bakes a crisp new moon *that . . . greedy*
North . . . Wind . . . eats . . . again!

Yet Gentle Will the Griffin Be

(*What Grandpa told the Children*)

The moon? It is a griffin's egg,
Hatching to-morrow night.
And how the little boys will watch
With shouting and delight
To see him break the shell and stretch
And creep across the sky.
The boys will laugh. The little girls,
I fear, may hide and cry.
Yet gentle will the griffin be,
Most decorous and fat,
And walk up to the milky way . . .
And lap it like a cat.

Vachel Lindsay

A HILLSIDE THAW

To think to know the country and not know
The hillside on the day the sun lets go
Ten million silver lizards out of snow.
As often as I've seen it done before
I can't pretend to tell the way it's done.
It looks as if some magic of the sun
Lifted the rug that bred them on the floor
And the light breaking on them made them run.
But if I thought to stop the wet stampede,
And caught one silver lizard by the tail,
And put my foot on one without avail,
And threw myself wet-elbowed and wet-kneed
In front of twenty others' wriggling speed,—
In the confusion of them all aglitter
And birds that joined in the excited fun
By doubling and redoubling song and twitter,
I have no doubt I'd end by holding none.

It takes the moon for this. The sun's a wizard
By all I tell; but so's the moon a witch.
From the high west she makes a gentle cast
And suddenly without a jerk or twitch
She has her spell on every single lizard.
I fancied when I looked at eight o'clock
The swarm still ran and scuttled just as fast.
The moon was waiting for her chill effect.
I looked at ten: the swarm was turned to rock
In every life-like posture of the swarm,
Transfixed on mountain slopes almost erect.
Across each other and side by side they lay.

The spell that so could hold them as they were
Was wrought through trees without a breath of storm
To make a leaf, if there had been one, stir.
It was the moon's. She held them until day,
One lizard at the end of every ray.
The thought of my attempting such a stay!

Robert Frost

APPARITIONS

I

Such a starved bank of moss
  Till, that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
  Violets were born!

II

Sky — what a scowl of cloud
  Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud:
  Splendid, a star!

III

World — how it walled about
  Life with disgrace
Till God's own smile came out:
  That was thy face!

Robert Browning

THREE PICTURES

Wistaria Blossoms

I see them on my trellises and walls
And straightway dream of distant waterfalls;

But when to distant waterfalls I roam
I dream of my wistarias at home.

Almond Blossoms

A rosy cloud of the dawn I see
Entangled there in the almond tree!

A Snowfall on Plum Trees After They had Bloomed

It is, indeed, a pleasant thing to know
Twice-flowering plum trees in my garden grow.

Charles Dalmon

THEOLOGY

The blade is sharp, the reaper stout,
And every daisy dies.
Their souls are fluttering about —
We call them butterflies.

Joyce Kilmer

APES AND IVORY

Apes and ivory, skulls and roses, in junks of old Hong-Kong,
Gliding over a sea of dreams to a haunted shore of song,
Masts of gold and sails of satin, shimmering out of the East,
Oh, Love has little need of you now to make his heart a feast.

Or is it an elephant, white as milk and bearing a severed head
That tatters his broad soft wrinkled flanks in tawdry patches of red,
With a negro giant to walk beside and a temple dome above,
Where ruby and emerald shatter the sun, — is it these that should please my love?

Or is it a palace of pomegranates, where ivory-limbed young slaves
Lure a luxury out of the noon in the swooning fountain's waves;
Or couch like cats and sun themselves on the warm white marble brink?
Oh, Love has little to ask of these, this day in May, I think.

Is it Lebanon cedars or purple fruits of the honeyed southern air,
Spikenard, saffron, roses of Sharon, cinnamon, calamus, myrrh,
A bed of spices, a fountain of waters, or the wild white wings of a dove,
Now, when the winter is over and gone, is it these that should please my love?

The leaves outburst on the hazel-bough and the hawthorn's heaped with flower,
And God has bidden the crisp clouds build my love a lordlier tower,
Taller than Lebanon, whiter than snow, in the fresh blue skies above;
And the wild rose wakes in the winding lanes of the radiant land I love.

Apes and ivory, skulls and roses, in junks of old Hong-Kong,
Gliding over a sea of dreams to a haunted shore of song,
Masts of gold and sails of satin, shimmering out of the East,
Oh, Love has little need of you now to make his heart a feast.

Alfred Noyes

CHIMES

Brief, on a flying night
From the shaken tower,
A flock of bells take flight,
And go with the hour.

Like birds from the cote to the gales,
Abrupt — O hark!
A fleet of bells set sails,
And go to the dark.

Sudden the cold airs swing,
Alone, aloud,
A verse of bells takes wing
And flies with the cloud.

Alice Meynell

A TREE AT DUSK

With secrets in their eyes the blue-winged Hours
Rustle through the meadow
Dropping shadow.

Yawning among red flowers,
The Moon Child with her golden hoop
And a pink star drifting after,
Leans to me where I droop.

I hear her delicate, soft laughter,
And through my hair her tiny fingers creep. . . .

I shall sleep.

Winifred Welles

VARIATIONS ON AN OLD NURSERY RHYME

The King of China's daughter
So beautiful to see
With her face like yellow water, left
Her nutmeg tree.

Her little rope for skipping
She skipped and gave it me —
Made of painted notes of singing-birds
Among the fields of tea.

I skipped across the nutmeg grove, —
I skipped across the sea;
But neither sun nor moon, my dear,
Has yet caught me.

Edith Sitwell

A PHANTASY OF HEAVEN

Perhaps he plays with cherubs now,
Those little, golden boys of God,
Bending, with them, some silver bough,
The while a seraph, head a-nod,

Slumbers on guard; how they will run
  And shout, if he should wake too soon, —
As fruit more golden than the sun
  And riper than the full-grown moon,

Conglobed in clusters, weighs them down,
  Like Atlas heaped with starry signs.
And, if they're tripped, heel over crown,
  By hidden coils of mighty vines, —

Perhaps the seraph, swift to pounce,
  Will hale them, vexed, to God — and He
Will only laugh, remembering, once
  He was a boy in Galilee!

Harry Kemp

DICK SAID: *

(*Concerning Heaven*)

Well, Heaven's hard to understand —
But it's a kind of great, big land
  All full of gold and glory;
With rivers green and pink and red,
And houses made of gingerbread
  Like in the fairy story.

The floors they use are made of clouds;
And there are crowds and crowds and crowds
  Who sing and dance till seven.
But then they must keep still because
God and the Dream-Man and Santa Claus
  Sleep in the big House of Heaven.

* See Note 13.

God, He sleeps on the first two floors;
And the Dream-Man sleeps above Him and snores,
A tired-out story-teller;
And Santa Claus, who hates the noise,
He sleeps on the roof with all his toys —
And the angels live in the cellar.

Now, the angels never sleep a wink,
They're much too busy to stop and think
Or play on harps and guitars.
They're always cleaning the sun at night,
And all day long, to keep them bright,
They polish the moon and the stars.

They clean the streets and they tidy the rooms,
And they sweep out Heaven with a million brooms,
And they hurry each other when they nod,
And they work so fast that they almost fall —
But God just sits and never works at all;
And that's because He's God!

Louis Untermeyer

SEA SHELL

Sea Shell, Sea Shell,
Sing me a song, O please!
A song of ships, and sailor men,
And parrots, and tropical trees,

Of islands lost in the Spanish Main
Which no man ever may find again,
Of fishes and corals under the waves,
And sea-horses stabled in great green caves.

Sea Shell, Sea Shell,
Sing of the things you know so well.

Amy Lowell

BALLADE OF BLUE CHINA *

There's a joy without canker or cark,[1]
  There's a pleasure eternally new,
'Tis to gloat on the glaze and the mark
  Of china that's ancient and blue;
  Unchipp'd all the centuries through
It has pass'd since the chime of it rang,
  And they fashion'd it, figure and hue,
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.

These dragons (their tails, you remark,
  Into bunches of gillyflowers grew),—
When Noah came out of the ark,
  Did these lie in wait for his crew?
  They snorted, they snapp'd and they slew;
They were mighty of fin and of fang,
  And their portraits Celestials drew
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.

Here's a pot with a cot in a park,
  In a park where the peach-blossoms blew,
Where the lovers eloped in the dark,
  Lived, died, and were changed into two
  Bright birds that eternally flew
Through the boughs of the may, as they sang;
  'Tis a tale was undoubtedly true
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.

* See Note 14.

[1] Canker or cark — distress or care.

Envoy

Come, snarl at my ecstasies, do,
  Kind critic, your "tongue has a tang,"
But — a sage never heeded a shrew
  In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.

Andrew Lang

OUR TWO GARDENS

We have two gardens. One is sweet
With flowers, and one grows things to eat.
My father calls them, just for fun,
The Mary and the Martha one.

Richard Kirk

THE DINKEY-BIRD

In an ocean, 'way out yonder
  (As all sapient people know),
Is the land of Wonder-Wander,
  Whither children love to go;
It's their playing, romping, swinging,
  That give great joy to me
While the Dinkey-Bird goes singing
  In the amfalula tree!

There the gum-drops grow like cherries
  And taffy's thick as peas —
Caramels you pick like berries
  When, and where, and how you please;

Big red sugar-plums are clinging
To the cliffs beside that sea
Where the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree.

So when children shout and scamper
And make merry all the day,
When there's naught to put a damper
To the ardor of their play;
When I hear their laughter ringing,
Then I'm sure as sure can be
That the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree.

For the Dinkey-Bird's bravuras
And staccatos are so sweet —
His roulades, appoggiaturas,[1]
And robustos so complete,
That the youth of every nation —
Be they near or far away —
Have especial delectation
In that gladsome roundelay.

Their eyes grow bright and brighter —
Their lungs begin to crow,
Their hearts get light and lighter,
And their cheeks are all aglow;
For an echo cometh bringing
The news to all and me,
That the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree.

I'm sure you'd like to go there
To see your feathered friend —

[1] These are the little twists, runs and shades in singing.

And so many goodies grow there
You would like to comprehend!
Speed, little dreams, your winging
To that land across the sea
Where the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree! *Eugene Field*

I WONDER WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE DROWNED?*

Look at my knees,
That island rising from the steamy seas!
The candle's a tall lightship; my two hands
Are boats and barges anchored to the sands,
With mighty cliffs all round;
They're full of wine and riches from far lands. . . .
I wonder what it feels like to be drowned?

I can make caves,
By lifting up the island and huge waves
And storms, and then with head and ears well under
Blow bubbles with a monstrous roar like thunder,
A bull-of-Bashan sound.
The seas run high and the boats split asunder. . . .
I wonder what it feels like to be drowned?

The thin soap slips
And slithers like a shark under the ships.
My toes are on the soap-dish — that's the effect
Of my huge storms; an iron steamer's wrecked!
The soap slides round and round;
He's biting the old sailors, I expect. . . .
I wonder what it feels like to be drowned?

Robert Graves

* See Note 15.

TALES AND BALLADS

THE HIGHWAYMAN

LITTLE BREECHES *

I don't go much on religion,
I never ain't had no show;
But I've got a middlin' tight grip, sir,
On the handful o' things I know.
I don't pan out on the prophets
And free-will, and that sort of thing, —
But I believe in God and the angels,
Ever since one night last spring.

I come into town with some turnips,
And my little Gabe came along, —
No four-year-old in the county
Could beat him for pretty and strong,
Peart and chipper and sassy,
Always ready to swear and fight, —
And I'd larnt him to chaw terbacker
Just to keep his milk-teeth white.

The snow come down like a blanket
And I passed by Taggart's store;
I went in for a jug of molasses
And left the team at the door.
They scared at something and started, —
I heard one little squall,
And hell-to-split over the prairie
Went team, Little Breeches and all.

* See Note 16.

Hell-to-split over the prairie,
I was almost froze with skeer;
But we rousted up some torches,
And sarched for 'em far and near.
At last we struck hosses and wagon,
Snowed under a soft white mound,
Upsot, dead beat,— but of little Gabe
No hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me,
Of my fellow-critter's aid,—
I jest flopped down on my marrow-bones,
Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.
. . . . . .
By this, the torches was played out,
And me and Isrul Parr
Went off for some wood to a sheepfold
That he said was somewhar thar.

We found it at last, and a little shed
Where they shut up the lambs at night.
We looked in and seen them huddled thar,
So warm and sleepy and white;
And thar sot Little Breeches and chirped,
As peart as ever you see,
"I want a chaw of terbacker,
And that's what's the matter of me."

How did he git thar? Angels.
He could never have walked in that storm.
They jest scooped down and toted him
To whar it was safe and warm.
And I think that saving a little child,
And bringing him to his own,

Is a derned sight better business
Than loafing around The Throne. *John Hay*

DANNY DEEVER

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.
"To turn you out, to turn you out," the Color-Sergeant said.
"What makes you look so white, so white?" said Files-on-Parade.
"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch," the Color-Sergeant said.
"For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can 'ear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square — they're hangin' him to-day;
They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,
An' they're hanging Danny Deever in the mornin'."

"What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard!" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold," the Color-Sergeant said.
"What makes that front-rank man fall down?" says Files-on-Parade.
"A touch of sun, a touch of sun," the Color-Sergeant said.
"They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round,
They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin', shootin' hound —
O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'."

"'Is cot was right 'and cot to mine," said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's sleepin' out an' far to-night," the Color-Sergeant said.

"I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times," said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's drinkin' bitter beer alone," the Color-Sergeant said,
"They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin' — you must look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the regiment's disgrace,
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'."

"What's that so black agin' the sun?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life," the Color-Sergeant said.
"What's that that whimpers over'ead?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny's soul that's passin' now," the Color-Sergeant said.
"For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the quick-step play,
The regiment's in column, an' they're marchin' us away;
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want their beer to-day,
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'."

Rudyard Kipling

TUBBY HOOK

(About two-thirds of a mile below Spuyten Duyvil, at the old settlement of Inwood from where the Dyckman Street ferry carries picnic-parties across the Hudson to the Palisades, there is a rock-edged cape which, before filling-in operations changed its rounded outline, by its appearance alone justified its old Dutch name of "Tobbe Hoeck" — the Cape of the Tub — now rendered "Tubby Hook.")

Mevrouw von Weber was brisk though fat;
She loved her neighbor, she loved her cat,
She loved her husband; but, here's the rub —
Beyond all conscience she loved her tub!

She rubbed and scrubbed with strange delight,
She scrubbed and rubbed from morn till night;
Her earthly hope
Was placed in soap;
Her walls and chimneypiece fairly shone,
Her skirts were starched so they stood alone!
By mop and duster and broom she swore.
She scrubbed the floor
Until she wore
The oak in channels from door to door.
The flood she reveled in never ebbed,
And hill to dale
Retold the tale
That both her hands and feet were webbed!

Now Hans, her husband, was mild and meek;
He let her scrub through the livelong week;
But when the sud of her washtub churned
On Easter Sunday! — the earthworm turned.
"Nay, vrouw," [1] quoth he,
"Let labor be!
This day when all of the world's at feast
Thou'lt wash no more — in *my* house, at least!"
She stopped her toil at her lord's command.
Without a sound
She flaunted round
And took her tub to the river strand,
Where Hans, who followed in dark dismay,
Could hear her vow,
His angry vrouw,
"I'll wash and wash till Judgment Day!"

[1] Vrouw — wife.

Along a river that leaped in flame
The Sailing Witches of Salem came.
(They ride the waters, that evil crew,
Wherever the Duyvil [1] hath work to do.)
And every witch in a washtub sat,
And every witch had a coal-black cat
That steered the course with a supple tail,
A shift for a sail,
A shell to bale,
A thread to reef when the wind blew strong,
A broom to whurry the bark along.

They hailed the vrouw on her spit of sand;
She waved them back with a soapy hand.
Cried one whose face was a Chinese mask,
"This dame is sworn to a goodly task!
Come, friends that ride on the crested swell,
We'll charm the spot with a lasting spell
That here she'll stay
And scour away,
And never rest till the Judgment Day!"
With cries to Satan and Beelzebub
They shaped the cape like an upturned tub! —
Beneath its dome and the shifting sands
That busy vrouw at her washtub stands,
While day and night
She bends her might
To scrub the fur of a black cat white!

When down the river the norther scuds
The waves are flecked with the rising suds.

[1] Duyvil — the Dutch word for devil.

When clouds roll black as a Dutchman's hat
You'll hear the wail of the injured cat!
So heed her fall,
Good housewives all,
And take this truth from a ragged song —
That super-cleanliness *may* go wrong!

Arthur Guiterman

THE HORSE THIEF *

There he moved, cropping the grass at the purple canyon's lip.
His mane was mixed with the moonlight that silvered his snow-white side,
For the moon sailed out of a cloud with the wake of a spectral ship.
I crouched and I crawled on my belly, my lariat coil looped wide.

Dimly and dark the mesas [1] broke on the starry sky.
A pall covered every color of their gorgeous glory at noon.
I smelt the yucca and mesquite, and stifled my heart's quick cry,
And wormed and crawled on my belly to where he moved against the moon!

Some Moorish barb was that mustang's sire. His lines were beyond all wonder.
From the prick of his ears to the flow of his tail he ached in my throat and eyes.

* See Note 17.
[1] Mesas — the Spanish word for plateau or high table-land.

Steel and velvet grace! As the prophet says, God had
"clothed his neck with thunder."
Oh, marvelous with the drifting cloud he drifted across
the skies!

And then I was near at hand — crouched, and balanced,
and cast the coil;
And the moon was smothered in cloud, and the rope
through my hands with a rip!
But somehow I gripped and clung, with the blood in my
brain a-boil, —
With a turn round the rugged tree-stump there on the
purple canyon's lip.

Right into the stars he reared aloft, his red eye rolling
and raging.
He whirled and sunfished and lashed, and rocked the
earth to thunder and flame.
He squealed like a regular devil horse. I was haggard
and spent and aging —
Roped clean, but almost storming clear, his fury too
fierce to tame.

And I cursed myself for a tenderfoot moon-dazzled to
play the part,
But I was doubly desperate then, with the posse [1] pulled
out from town,
Or I'd never have tried it. I only knew I must get a
mount and a start.
The filly had snapped her foreleg short. I had had to
shoot her down.

[1] Posse — (pronounced póssee) a group of people banded together to assist the sheriff in tracking down a criminal.

So there he struggled and strangled, and I snubbed him around the tree.
Nearer, a little nearer — hoofs planted, and lolling tongue —
Till a sudden slack pitched me backward. He reared right on top of me.
Mother of God — that moment! He missed me . . . and up I swung.

Somehow, gone daft completely and clawing a bunch of his mane,
As he stumbled and tripped in the lariat, there I was — up and astride
And cursing for seven counties! And the mustang? *Just insane!*
Crack-bang! went the rope; we cannoned off the tree — then — gods, that ride!

A rocket — that's all, a rocket! I dug with my teeth and nails.
Why, we never hit even the high spots (though I hardly remember things),
But I heard a monstrous booming like a thunder of flapping sails
When he spread — well, *call* me a liar! — when he spread those wings, those wings!

So white that my eyes were blinded, thick-feathered and wide unfurled,
They beat the air into billows. We sailed, and the earth was gone.
Canyon and desert and mesa withered below, with the world.
And then I knew that mustang; for I — was Bellerophon!

Yes, glad as the Greek, and mounted on a horse of the elder gods,
With never a magic bridle or a fountain-mirror nigh!
My chaps and spurs and holster must have looked it?
What's the odds?
I'd a leg over lightning and thunder, careering across the sky!

And forever streaming before me, fanning my forehead cool,
Flowed a mane of molten silver; and just before my thighs
(As I gripped his velvet-muscled ribs, while I cursed myself for a fool),
The steady pulse of those pinions — their wonderful fall and rise!

The bandanna I bought in Bowie blew loose and whipped from my neck.
My shirt was stuck to my shoulders and ribboning out behind.
The stars were dancing, wheeling and glancing, dipping with smirk and beck.
The clouds were flowing, dusking and glowing. We rode a roaring wind.

We soared through the silver starlight to knock at the planets' gates.
New shimmering constellations came whirling into our ken.
Red stars and green and golden swung out of the void that waits
For man's great last adventure; the Signs took shape — and then

I knew the lines of that Centaur the moment I saw him come!
The musical box of the heavens all round us rolled to a tune
That tinkled and chimed and trilled with silver sounds that struck you dumb,
As if some archangel were grinding out the music of the moon.

Melody-drunk on the Milky Way, as we crept and soared hilarious,
Full in our pathway, sudden he stood — the Centaur of the Stars,
Flashing from head and hoofs and breast! I knew him for Sagittarius.
He reared, and bent and drew his bow. He crouched as a boxer spars.

Flung back on his haunches, weird he loomed — then leapt — and the dim void lightened.
Old White Wings shied and swerved aside, and fled from the splendor-shod.
Through a flashing welter of worlds we charged. I knew why my horse was frightened.
He *had* two faces — a dog's and a man's — that Babylonian god!

Also, he followed us real as fear. Ping! went an arrow past.
My broncho buck-jumped, humping high. We plunged . . . I guess that's all!
I lay on the purple canyon's lip, when I opened my eyes at last —
Stiff and sore and my head like a drum, but I broke no bones in the fall.

So you know — and now you may string me up. Such
was the way you caught me.
Thank you for letting me tell it straight, though you
never could greatly care.
For I took a horse that wasn't mine! . . . But there's one
the heavens brought me,
And I'll hang right happy, because I know he is wait-
ing for me up there.

From creamy muzzle to cannon-bone, by God, he's a peer-
less wonder!
He is steel and velvet and furnace-fire, and death's
supremest prize,
And never again shall be roped on earth that neck that is
" clothed with thunder. . . ."
String me up, Dave! Go dig my grave! I *rode him*
across the skies!

William Rose Benét

THE FIRST STORY

Mid seaweed on a sultry strand, ten thousand years ago,
A sun-burned baby sprawling lay, a-playing with his toe.

The babe was dreaming of the day that he might swing a
club,
When lo! He saw a fishy thing, a-squirming in the mud.

The creature was an octopus, and dangerous to pat,
But the prehistoric infant never stopped to think of that.

The baby's fingernails were sharp, his appetite was prime,
He clutched that deep-sea monster, for 'twas nearing
supper-time.

Oh! Suddenly, from out the pulp a fluid black did flow,
'Twas flavored like a barberry wine and gave a sort of
glow;

It squirted in the baby's eyes; it made him gasp and blink,
But to that octopus he held, and drank up all the ink.

The ink was in the baby — he was bound to write a tale;
So he wrote the first of stories with his little fingernail!

Nathalia Crane

FROM THE DAY-BOOK OF A FORGOTTEN PRINCE

My father is happy or we should be poor,
His gateway is wide and the folk of the moor
Come singing so gaily right up to the door.

We live in a castle that's dingy and old;
The casements are broken, the corridors cold;
The larder is empty, the cook is a scold.

But father can dance and his singing is loud.
From meadow and highway there's always a crowd
That gathers to hear him, and this makes him proud.

He roars out a song in a voice that is sweet,
Of grandeur that's gone, rare viands to eat,
And treasure that used to be laid at his feet.

He picks up his robe, faded, wrinkled and torn,
Though banded in ermine, moth-eaten and worn,
And held at the throat by a twisted old thorn.

He leaps in the air with a rickety grace
And a kingly old smile illumines his face,
While he fondles his beard and stares off into space.

The villagers laugh, then look quickly away,
And some of them kneel in the orchard to pray.
I often hear whispers: "The old king is fey!"

But after they're gone we shall find, if you please,
White loaves and a pigeon and honey and cheese,
And wine that we drink while I sit on his knees.

And then, while he sups, he will feed me and tell
Of Mother, whom men used to call "The Gazelle,"
And of glorious times before the curse fell.

At last he will sink, half-asleep, to the floor;
The rafters will echo his quivering snore. . . .
I go to find cook through the slack, oaken door.

* * * *

My father is happy or we should be poor;
His gateway is wide and the folk at the moor
Come singing so gaily right up to the door.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

THE BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST *

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;

* See Note 18.

But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border side,
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride:
He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and the day,
And turned the calkins [1] upon her feet, and ridden her far away.
Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of the Guides:
"Is there never a man of all my men can say where Kamal hides?"
Then up and spoke Mahommed Khan, the son of the Ressaldar,
"If ye know the track of the morning-mist, ye know where his pickets are.
"At dusk he harries the Abazai — at dawn he is into Bonair,
"But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare,
"So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,
"By the favor of God ye may cut him off ere he win to the Tongue of Jagai,
"But if he be past the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn ye then,
"For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain is sown with Kamal's men.
"There is rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,

[1] Calkins — sharp points of iron on the shoe of a horse, put there to prevent slipping.

"And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man is seen."

The Colonel's son has taken a horse, and a raw rough dun was he,
With the mouth of a bell and the heart of Hell, and the head of the gallows-tree.
The Colonel's son to the Fort has won, they bid him stay to eat —
Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not long at his meat.
He's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he can fly,
Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the Tongue of Jagai,
Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal upon her back,
And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the pistol crack.
He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whistling ball went wide.
"Ye shoot like a soldier," Kamal said. "Show now if ye can ride."
It's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown dust-devils go,
The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare like a barren doe.
The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head above,
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a maiden plays with a glove.
There was rock to the left and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick tho' never a man was seen.

They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their hoofs drum up the dawn,
The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare like a new-roused fawn.
The dun he fell at a water-course — in a woful heap fell he,
And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and pulled the rider free.
He has knocked the pistol out of his hand — small room was there to strive,
"'Twas only by favor of mine," quoth he, "ye rode so long alive:
"There was not a rock for twenty mile, there was not a clump of tree,
"But covered a man of my own men with his rifle cocked on his knee.
"If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it low,
"The little jackals that flee so fast, were feasting all in a row:
"If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have held it high,
"The kite that whistles above us now were gorged till she could not fly."
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "Do good to bird and beast,
"But count who come for the broken meats before thou makest a feast.
"If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away,
"Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay.

"They will feed their horse on the standing crop, their men on the garnered grain,

"The thatch of the byres will serve their fires when all the cattle are slain.
"But if thou thinkest the price be fair, — thy brethren wait to sup,
"The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn, — howl, dog, and call them up!
"And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and gear and stack,
"Give me my father's mare again, and I'll fight my own way back!"
Kamal has gripped him by the hand and set him upon his feet.
"No talk shall be of dogs," said he, "when wolf and grey wolf meet.
"May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or breath;
"What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the dawn with Death?"
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "I hold by the blood of my clan:
"Take up the mare for my father's gift — by God, she has carried a man!"
The red mare ran to the Colonel's son, and nuzzled against his breast,
"We be two strong men," said Kamal then, "but she loveth the younger best.
"So she shall go with a lifter's dower, my turquoise-studded rein,
"My broidered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stirrups twain."

The Colonel's son a pistol drew and held it muzzle-end,
"Ye have taken the one from a foe," said he; "will ye take the mate from a friend?"

"A gift for a gift," said Kamal straight, "a limb for the risk of a limb.
"Thy father has sent his son to me, I'll send my son to him!"
With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a mountain-crest —
He trod the ling like a buck in spring, and he looked like a lance in rest.
"Now here is thy master," Kamal said, "who leads a troop of the Guides,
"And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder rides.
"Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and bed,
"Thy life is his — thy fate it is to guard him with thy head.
"So thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and all her foes are thine,
"And thou must harry thy father's hold for the peace of the Borderline,
"And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power —
"Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged in Peshawur."

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault,
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt:
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,
On the hilt and the halt of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.

The Colonel's son he rides the mare and Kamal's boy the dun,
And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where there went forth but one.
And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full twenty swords flew clear —
There was not a man but carried his feud with the blood of the mountaineer.
"Ha' done! ha' done!" said the Colonel's son. "Put up the steel at your sides!
"Last night ye had struck at a Border thief — to-night 'tis a man of the Guides!"

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the two shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth.

Rudyard Kipling

A BALLAD OF JOHN SILVER

We were schooner-rigged and rakish, with a long and lissome hull,
And we flew the pretty colours of the cross-bones and the skull;
We'd a big black Jolly Roger flapping grimly at the fore,
And we sailed the Spanish Water in the happy days of yore.

We'd a long brass gun amidships, like a well-conducted ship,
We had each a brace of pistols and a cutlass at the hip;
It's a point which tells against us, and a fact to be deplored,
But we chased the goodly merchant-men and laid their ships aboard.

Then the dead men fouled the scuppers and the wounded filled the chains,
And the paint-work all was spatter-dashed with other people's brains,
She was boarded, she was looted, she was scuttled till she sank,
And the pale survivors left us by the medium of the plank.

O! then it was (while standing by the taffrail on the poop)
We could hear the drowning folk lament the absent chicken-coop;
Then, having washed the blood away, we'd little else to do
Than to dance a quiet hornpipe as the old salts taught us to.

O! the fiddle on the fo'c's'le, and the slapping naked soles,
And the genial 'Down the middle, Jake, and curtsey when she rolls!'
With the silver seas around us and the pale moon overhead,
And the look-out not a-looking and his pipe-bowl glowing red.

Ah! the pig-tailed, quidding pirates and the pretty pranks we played,
All have since been put a stop-to by the naughty Board of Trade;

The schooners and the merry crews are laid away to rest,
A little south the sunset in the Islands of the Blest.

John Masefield

THE BLESSÈD DAMOZEL *

The blessèd damozel leaned out
  From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
  Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
  And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
  No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
  For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
  Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed [1] she scarce had been a day
  One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
  From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
  Had counted as ten years.

It was the rampart of God's house
  That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
  The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
  She scarce could see the sun.

* See Note 19.

[1] *Herseemed:* It seemed to her.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
  Of ether, as a bridge,
Beneath, the tides of day and night
  With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
  Spins like a fretful midge.[1]

Around her, lovers, newly met
  'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
  Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
  Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
  Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
  The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
  Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
  Time, like a pulse, shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
  Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
  The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
  Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
  She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
  Had when they sang together.

[1] *Midge* — a tiny insect.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come," she said.
"Have I not prayed in Heaven? — on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

"When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know.'

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles;
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.[1]

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me: —

[1] *Citherns and citoles:* stringed instruments like the zither and guitar.

Only to live as once on earth
With Love, only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild, —
"All this is when he comes." She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, filled
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

THE SLAVE'S DREAM

Beside the ungathered rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode;

And heard the tinkling caravans
  Descend the mountain-road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
  Among her children stand;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
  They held him by the hand! —
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
  And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
  Along the Niger's bank;
His bridle-reins were golden chains,
  And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
  Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
  The bright flamingoes flew;
From morn till night he followed their flight,
  O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
  And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar,
  And the hyæna scream,
And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds
  Beside some hidden stream;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
  Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,
  Shouted of liberty;
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,

With a voice so wild and free,
That he started in his sleep and smiled
At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of the day;
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX *

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique [1] right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;

* See Note 20.

[1] Pique — in this connection, "pique" is part of the saddle.

At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence, — ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
"Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
"We'll remember at Aix" — for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!" and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or
good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sate with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground,
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from
Ghent.

Robert Browning

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE *

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
"Forward the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!" he said,
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

* See Note 21.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turned in air
Sabring the gunners there.
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd.
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke.
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not,
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
  Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of hell,
All that was left of them,
  Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
  All the world wonder'd.
Honor the charge they made!
Honor the Light Brigade,
  Noble six hundred!

Alfred Tennyson

THE SANDS OF DEE

'O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
  And call the cattle home,
  And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee;'
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
  And o'er and o'er the sand,
  And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.
The rolling mist came down and hid the land:
And never home came she.

'Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair —
A tress of golden hair,
A drowned maiden's hair
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee.'

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee.

Charles Kingsley

THE PURITAN'S BALLAD

My love came up from Barnegat,
The sea was in his eyes;
He trod as softly as a cat
And told me terrible lies.

His hair was yellow as new-cut pine
In shavings curled and feathered;
I thought how silver it would shine
By cruel winters weathered.

But he was in his twentieth year,
This time I'm speaking of;
We were head over heels in love with fear
And half a-feared of love.

My hair was piled in a copper crown —
A devilish living thing,
And the tortoise-shell pins fell down, fell down,
When that snake uncoiled to spring.

His feet were used to treading a gale
And balancing thereon;
His face was brown as a foreign sail
Threadbare against the sun.

His arms were thick as hickory logs
Whittled to little wrists;
Strong as the teeth of terrier dogs
Were the fingers of his fists.

Within his arms I feared to sink
Where lions shook their manes,
And dragons drawn in azure ink
Leapt quickened by his veins.

Dreadful his strength and length of limb
As the sea to foundering ships;
I dipped my hands in love for him
No deeper than their tips.

But our palms were welded by a flame
The moment we came to part,
And on his knuckles I read my name
Enscrolled within a heart.

And something made our wills to bend
As wild as trees blown over;
We were no longer friend and friend,
But only lover and lover.

"In seven weeks or seventy years —
God grant it may be sooner! —
I'll make a handkerchief for your tears
From the sails of my captain's schooner.

We'll wear our loves like wedding rings
  Long polished to our touch;
We shall be busy with other things
  And they cannot bother us much.

When you are skimming the wrinkled cream
  And your ring clinks on the pan,
You'll say to yourself in a pensive dream,
  'How wonderful a man!'

When I am slitting a fish's head
  And my ring clanks on the knife,
I'll say with thanks, as a prayer is said,
  'How beautiful a wife!'

And I shall fold my decorous paws
  In velvet smooth and deep,
Like a kitten that covers up its claws
  To sleep and sleep and sleep.

Like a little blue pigeon you shall bow
  Your bright alarming crest;
In the crook of my arm you'll lay your brow
  To rest and rest and rest."

Will he never come back from Barnegat
  With thunder in his eyes,
Treading as soft as a tiger cat,
  To tell me terrible lies? *Elinor Wylie*

WHOOPEE TI YI YO

As I was a-walking one morning for pleasure,
  I spied a cow-puncher all riding along;
His hat was throwed back and his spurs was a-jingling,
  And he approached me, a-singing this song:

Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies,[1]
It's your misfortune, and none of my own.
Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home.

Early in spring we round up the dogies,
Mark 'em and brand 'em and bob off their tails;
Round up the horses, load up the chuck-wagon,
Then throw the dogies upon the old trail.

It's whooping and yelling and driving the dogies;
Oh, how I wish you would all go on!
It's whooping and punching and "Go on, little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home."

Oh, you'll be soup for Uncle Sam's Injuns, —
It's "beef, heap beef," I hear them cry.
Git along, git along, git along, little dogies,
You're going to be beef steers by and by.

Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies,
It's your misfortune, and none of my own.
Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home.

American Cowboy Ballad

FATHER GILLIGAN

The old priest Peter Gilligan
Was weary night and day,
For half his flock were in their beds,
Or under green sod lay.

[1] *dogies:* young cattle.

Once while he nodded on a chair,
At the moth-hour of eve,
Another poor man sent for him,
And he began to grieve.

"I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,
For people die and die;"
And after cried he, "God forgive!
My body spake, not I!"

And then, half-lying on the chair,
He knelt, prayed, fell asleep;
And the moth-hour went from the fields,
And stars began to peep.

They slowly into millions grew,
And leaves shook in the wind;
And God covered the world with shade,
And whispered to mankind.

Upon the time of sparrow-chirp
When the moths came once more,
The old priest Peter Gilligan
Stood upright on the floor.

"*Mavrone, mavrone!* the man has died,
While I slept on the chair;"
He roused his horse out of its sleep,
And rode with little care.

He rode now as he never rode,
By rocky lane and fen;
The sick man's wife opened the door:
"Father! you come again!"

"And is the poor man dead?" he cried.
"He died an hour ago."
The old priest Peter Gilligan
In grief swayed to and fro.

"When you were gone he turned and died,
As merry as a bird."
The old priest Peter Gilligan
He knelt him at that word.

"He who hath made the night of stars
For souls who tire and bleed,
Sent one of His great angels down
To help me in my need.

"He who is wrapped in purple robes,
With planets in his care,
Had pity on the least of things
Asleep upon a chair."

William Butler Yeats

THE HIGHWAYMAN [1] *

Part One

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding —
Riding — riding —
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Collected Poems, Vol. I,* by Alfred Noyes. Copyright, 1913, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.
* See Note 22.

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace
at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up to
the thigh!
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,
His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark
inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was
locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be
waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where Tim the ostler [1] listened; his face was white and
peaked;
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's red-lipped daughter.
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say —

"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morn-
ing light;

[1] *Ostler:* one who takes care of the horses, a groom.

Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way."

He rose upright in the stirrups; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement! His face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
(Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the West.

Part Two

He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A red-coat troop came marching —
Marching — marching —
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed;

Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window;
And hell at one dark window;
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that *he* would ride.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest;
They had bound a musket beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast!
"Now keep good watch!" and they kissed her. She heard the dead man say —
Look for me by moonlight;
Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath her breast,

She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.

Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding,
Riding, riding!
The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up straight and still!

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot,* in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him — with her death.

He turned; he spurred to the West; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, his face grew grey to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,

Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat,
When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with the bunch of lace at his throat.

* * * * * * *

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding —
Riding — riding —
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard;
He taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

Alfred Noyes

JOHN SILVER

LAUGHING LEGENDS

THE LOST SHOE *

Poor little Lucy
By some mischance,
Lost her shoe
As she did dance:
'Twas not on the stairs,
Not in the hall;
Not where they sat
At supper at all.
She looked in the garden,
But there it was not;
Henhouse, or kennel,
Or high dovecote.
Dairy and meadow,
And wild woods through
Showed not a trace
Of Lucy's shoe.
Bird nor bunny
Nor glimmering moon
Breathed a whisper
Of where 'twas gone.
It was cried and cried,
Oyez and Oyez!
In French, Dutch, Latin,
And Portuguese.
Ships the dark seas
Went plunging through,

* See Note 23.

But none brought news
  Of Lucy's shoe;
And still she patters
  In silk and leather,
O'er snow, sand, shingle,
  In every weather;
Spain, and Africa,
  Hindustan,
Java, China,
  And lamped Japan;
Plain and desert,
  She hops — hops through,
Pernambuco
  To gold Peru;
Mountain and forest,
  And river too,
All the world over
  For her lost shoe.

Walter de la Mare

THE TWINS

In form and feature, face and limb,
  I grew so like my brother,
That folks got taking me for him,
  And each for one another.
It puzzled all our kith and kin,
  It reached an awful pitch;
For one of us was born a twin,
  Yet not a soul knew which.

One day (to make the matter worse),
  Before our names were fixed,

As we were being washed by nurse
We got completely mixed;
And thus, you see, by Fate's decree,
(Or rather nurse's whim),
My brother John got christened *me*,
And I got christened *him*.

This fatal likeness even dogg'd
My footsteps when at school,
And I was always getting flogg'd,
For John turned out a fool.
I put this question hopelessly
To every one I knew —
What *would* you do, if you were me,
To prove that you were *you?*

Our close resemblance turned the tide
Of my domestic life;
For somehow my intended bride
Became my brother's wife.
In short, year after year the same
Absurd mistake went on;
And when I died — the neighbors came
And buried brother John!

Henry S. Leigh

THE LITTLE PEACH

A little peach in the orchard grew —
A little peach of emerald hue;
Warmed by the sun and wet by the dew,
It grew.

One day, passing the orchard through,
That little peach dawned on the view
Of Johnnie Jones and his sister Sue —
Those two.

Up at the peach a club he threw —
Down from the tree on which it grew
Fell the little peach of emerald hue —
Mon dieu!

She took a bite and he a chew,
And then the trouble began to brew —
Trouble the doctor couldn't subdue —
Too true!

Under the turf where the daisies grew
They planted John and his sister Sue,
And their little souls to the angels flew —
Boo-hoo!

But what of the peach of emerald hue,
Warmed by the sun and wet by the dew?
Ah, well, its mission on earth was through —
Adieu!

Eugene Field

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S STORY *

The night was thick and hazy
When the "Piccadilly Daisy"
Carried down the crew and captain in the sea;
And I think the water drowned 'em;
For they never, never found 'em,
And I know they didn't come ashore with me.

* See Note 24.

Oh! 'twas very sad and lonely
When I found myself the only
Population on this cultivated shore;
But I've made a little tavern
In a rocky little cavern,
And I sit and watch for people at the door.

I spent no time in looking
For a girl to do my cooking,
As I'm quite a clever hand at making stews;
But I had that fellow Friday,
Just to keep the tavern tidy,
And to put a Sunday polish on my shoes.

I have a little garden
That I'm cultivating lard in,
As the things I eat are rather tough and dry;
For I live on toasted lizards,
Prickly pears, and parrot gizzards,
And I'm really very fond of beetle-pie.

The clothes I had were furry,
And it made me fret and worry
When I found the moths were eating off the hair;
And I had to scrape and sand 'em,
And I boiled 'em and I tanned 'em,
Till I got the fine morocco suit I wear.

I sometimes seek diversion
In a family excursion
With the few domestic animals you see;
And we take along a carrot
As refreshment for the parrot,
And a little can of jungleberry tea.

Then we gather as we travel,
Bits of moss and dirty gravel,
And we chip off little specimens of stone;
And we carry home as prizes
Funny bugs, of handy sizes,
Just to give the day a scientific tone.

If the roads are wet and muddy
We remain at home and study, —
For the Goat is very clever at a sum, —
And the Dog, instead of fighting,
Studies ornamental writing,
While the Cat is taking lessons on the drum.

We retire at eleven,
And we rise again at seven;
And I wish to call attention, as I close,
To the fact that all the scholars
Are correct about their collars,
And particular in turning out their toes.

Charles E. Carryl

THOMSON GREEN AND HARRIET HALE

Oh, list to this incredible tale
Of Thomson Green and Harriet Hale;
Its truth in one remark you'll sum —
"Twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twum!"

Oh, Thomson Green was an auctioneer,
And made three hundred pounds a year;
And Harriet Hale, most strange to say,
Gave pianoforte lessons at a sovereign a day.

Oh, Thomson Green, I may remark,
Met Harriet Hale in Regent's Park,
Where he, in a casual kind of way,
Spoke of the extraordinary beauty of the day.

They met again, and strange though true,
He courted her for a month or two,
Then to her Pa he said, says he,
"Old man, I love your daughter and your daughter worships me!"

Their names were regularly banned,
The wedding day was settled, and
I've ascertained by dint of search
They were married on the quiet at St. Mary Abbott's Church.

Oh, list to this incredible tale
Of Thomson Green and Harriet Hale,
Its truth in one remark you'll sum —
"Twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twum!"

That very selfsame afternoon
They started on their honeymoon,
And (oh, astonishment!) took flight
To a pretty little cottage close to Shanklin, Isle of Wight.

They led a weird and reckless life,
They dined each day, this man and wife,
(Pray disbelieve it, if you please)
On a joint of meat, a pudding, and a little bit of cheese.

In time came those maternal joys
Which take the form of girls or boys
And, strange to say, of each they'd one —
A tiddy-iddy daughter, and a tiddy-iddy son.

Oh, list to this incredible tale
Of Thomson Green and Harriet Hale,
Its truth in one remark you'll sum —
"Twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twum!"

My name for truth is gone, I fear,
But, monstrous as it may appear,
They let their drawing-room one day
To an eligible person in the cotton-broking way.

For thirty years this curious pair
Hung out in Canonbury Square,
And somehow, wonderful to say!
They loved each other dearly in a quiet sort of way.

Well, Thomson Green fell ill and died;
For just a year his widow cried,
And then her heart she gave away
To the eligible lodger in the cotton-broking way.

Oh, list to this incredible tale
Of Thomson Green and Harriet Hale.
Its truth in one remark you'll sum —
"Twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twaddle twum!"

W. S. Gilbert

THE HERO COCKROACH*

(In the manner of the earlier Kipling)

The Cockroach stood by the mickle wood in the flush of the astral dawn,
And he sniffed the air from the hidden lair where the Khyber swordfish spawn;
The bilge and belch of the glutton Welsh as they smelted their warlock cheese
Surged to and fro where the grinding floe wrenched at the Headland's knees.

Half seas over! Under — up again!
And the barnacles white in the moon!
The pole star's chasing its tail like a pup again,
And the dish runs away with the spoon!

The waterspout came bellowing out of the red horizon's rim,
And the gray Typhoon and the black Monsoon surged forth to the fight with him,
With threefold might they surged to the fight for they hated the great bull Roach; —
And they cried, "Begod!" as they lashed the sod, "And here is an Egg to Poach!

"We will bash his mug with his own raw lug new-stripped from off his dome,
For there is no law but tooth and claw to the nor' nor'east of Nome!
The Punjaub Gull shall have his skull ere he goes to the burning ghaut,

* See Note 25.

For we have no time for aught but crime where the jungle lore is taught!
Across the dark the Afghan Shark is whining for his head —
There shall be no rule but death and drool till the deep red maws are fed! "

Half seas under! Up! and down again!
And her keel was blown off in a squall!
Girls, we misdoubt that we'll ever see town again —
Haul, boys! Hall boys! Haul!

The Cockroach spat — and he tilted his hat and he grinned through the lowering murk,
The Cockroach felt in his rangoon belt for his good Bengali dirk,
He reefed his mast against the blast and he bent his mizzen free
And he flung the cleats of his binnacle sheets in the teeth of the yeasty sea!

He opened his mouth and he sluiced his drouth with his last good can of swipes —
" Begod! " he cried, " they come in pride, but they shall go home with the gripes! "
" Begod," he said, " if they want my head it is here on top of my chine —
It shall never be said that I doffed my head for the boast of a heathen line! "
And he scorned to wait but he dared his fate and loosed his bridle rein
And leapt to close with his red-fanged foes in the trough of the howling main!

Half seas over! Down again and up!
And the cobra is wild with her fleas —
The rajah whines to the pukka's pup,
And there's dirt in the Narrow Seas!

From Hell to Nome the blow went home where the Cockroach struck his foe,
From Nome to Hell the mongeese yell as they see the black blood flow;
The hawsers snort from the firing port as the conning chains give way
And the chukkers roar till they rouse the boar on the hills of Mandalay; —
And the Cockroach said as he tilted his head: " Now, luff! you beggars, luff!
Begod," says he, " it is easy to see ye cannot swallow my duff!
I have tickled ye, I have pickled ye, I have scotched your mizzen brace,
And the charnel shark in the outer dark shall strip the nose from your face —

" Begod," says he, " it is easy to see that the Narrow Seas are mine,
So creep ye home to your lair at Nome and patch your guts with twine!
Begod " (says he) " it is easy to see who rules this bloody bight —
Come ye again, my merry men, whenever ye thirst for fight! "
Half seas over! Stop! She is queasy!
The Cockroach has dropped in the stew!
Honestly, fellows, this stuff is easy!
The trouble's to tell when you're through.

Don Marquis

JIM

There was a Boy whose name was Jim;
His Friends were very good to him.
They gave him Tea, and Cakes, and Jam,
And slices of delicious Ham,
And Chocolate with pink inside
And little Tricycles to ride,
And read him Stories through and through,
And even took him to the Zoo —
But there it was the dreadful Fate
Befell him, which I now relate.

You know — at least you ought to know,
For I have often told you so —
That Children never are allowed
To leave their Nurses in a Crowd;
Now this was Jim's especial Foible,
He ran away when he was able,
And on this inauspicious day
He slipped his hand and ran away!

He hadn't gone a yard when — Bang!
With open Jaws, a Lion sprang,
And hungrily began to eat
The Boy: beginning at his feet.
Now, just imagine how it feels
When first your toes and then your heels,
And then by gradual degrees,
Your shins and ankles, calves and knees,
Are slowly eaten, bit by bit.
No wonder Jim detested it!

No wonder that he shouted "Hi!"
The Honest Keeper heard his cry,

Though very fat he almost ran
To help the little gentleman.
"Ponto!" he ordered as he came
(For Ponto was the Lion's name),
"Ponto!" he cried, with angry Frown,
"Let go, Sir! Down, Sir! Put it down!"
The Lion made a sudden stop,
He let the Dainty Morsel drop,
And slunk reluctant to his Cage,
Snarling with Disappointed Rage.
But when he bent him over Jim,
The Honest Keeper's Eyes were dim.
The Lion having reached his Head,
The Miserable Boy was dead!

When Nurse informed his Parents, they
Were more Concerned than I can say: —
His Mother, as She dried her eyes,
Said, "Well — it gives me no surprise,
He would not do as he was told!"
His Father, who was self-controlled,
Bade all the children round attend
To James's miserable end,
And always keep a-hold of Nurse
For fear of finding something worse.

Hilaire Belloc

THE YARN OF THE *NANCY BELL* *

'Twas on the shores that round our coast
From Deal to Ramsgate span
That I found alone, on a piece of stone,
An elderly naval man.

* See Note 26.

His hair was weedy, his beard was long,
And weedy and long was he,
And I heard this wight on the shore recite,
In a singular minor key:

"Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

And he shook his fists and he tore his hair,
Till I really felt afraid;
For I couldn't help thinking the man had been drinking,
And so I simply said:

"Oh, elderly man, it's little I know
Of the duties of men of the sea,
And I'll eat my hand if I understand
How you can possibly be

"At once a cook, and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

Then he gave a hitch to his trousers, which
Is a trick all seamen l'arn,
And having got rid of a thumping quid,
He spun this painful yarn:

"'Twas in the good ship *Nancy Bell*
That we sailed to the Indian sea,
And there on a reef we come to grief,
Which has often occurred to me.

"And pretty nigh all o' the crew was drowned
(There was seventy-seven o' soul),
And only ten of the *Nancy's* men
Said 'Here!' to the muster roll.

"There was me and the cook and the captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And the bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig.

"For a month we'd neither wittles nor drink,
Till a-hungry we did feel,
So, we drawed a lot, and, accordin', shot
The captain for our meal.

"The next lot fell to the *Nancy's* mate,
And a delicate dish he made;
Then our appetite with the midshipmite
We seven survivors stayed.

"And then we murdered the bo'sun tight,
And he much resembled pig;
Then we wittled free, did the cook and me,
On the crew of the captain's gig.

"Then only the cook and me was left,
And the delicate question, 'Which
Of us two goes to the kettle?' arose,
And we argued it out as sich.

"For I loved that cook as a brother, I did,
And the cook he worshipped me;
But we'd both be blowed if we'd either be stowed
In the other chap's hold, you see.

" 'I'll be eat if you dines off me,' says Tom,
'Yes, that,' says I, 'you'll be,' —
'I'm boiled if I die, my friend,' quoth I,
And 'Exactly so,' quoth he.

" Says he, 'Dear James, to murder me
Were a foolish thing to do,
For don't you see that you can't cook *me,*
While I can — and will — cook you! '

" So, he boils the water, and takes the salt
And the pepper in portions true
(Which he never forgot), and some chopped shallot,
And some sage and parsley too.

" 'Come here,' says he, with a proper pride,
Which his smiling features tell,
'Twill soothing be if I let you see
How extremely nice you'll smell.'

" And he stirred it round and round and round,
And he sniffed at the foaming froth;
When I ups with his heels, and smothers his squeals
In the scum of the boiling broth.

" And I eat that cook in a week or less,
And — as I eating be
The last of his chops, why I almost drops,
For a vessel in sight I see.

. . . . . .

" And I never larf, and I never smile,
And I never lark nor play,
But I sit and croak, and a single joke
I have — which is to say:

"Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig!"

W. S. Gilbert

ELLEN McJONES ABERDEEN

Macphairson Clonglocketty Angus McClan
Was the son of an elderly labouring man;
You've guessed him a Scotchman, shrewd reader, at sight,
And p'r'aps altogether, shrewd reader, you're right.

From the bonnie blue Forth to the beastly Deeside,
Round by Dingwall and Wrath to the mouth of the Clyde,
There wasn't a child or a woman or man
Who could pipe with Clonglocketty Angus McClan.

No other could wake such detestable groans,
With reed and with chaunter [1] — with bag and with drones: [2]
All day and all night he delighted the chiels
With sniggering pibrochs [3] and jiggety reels.

He'd clamber a mountain and squat on the ground,
And the neighbouring maidens would gather around
To list to his pipes and to gaze in his een,
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

[1] The shrill, tenor pipe in the bagpipe.
[2] The large tube of the bagpipe that gives the deep, droning sound.
[3] A wild, exciting music.

All loved their McClan, save a Sassenach [1] brute,
Who came to the Highlands to fish and to shoot;
He dressed himself up in a Highlander way;
Tho' his name it was Pattison Corby Torbay.

Torbay had incurred a good deal of expense
To make him a Scotchman in every sense;
But this is a matter, you'll readily own,
That isn't a question of tailors alone.

A Sassenach chief may be bonily built,
He may purchase a sporran,[2] a bonnet, and kilt;
Stick a skean [3] in his hose — wear an acre of stripes —
But he cannot assume an affection for pipes.

Clonglocketty's pipings all night and all day
Quite frenzied poor Pattison Corby Torbay;
The girls were amused at his singular spleen,
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

"Macphairson Clonglocketty Angus, my lad,
With pibrochs and reels you are driving me mad.
If you really must play on that cursed affair,
My goodness! play something resembling an air."

Boiled over the blood of Macphairson McClan —
The Clan of Clonglocketty rose as one man;
For all were enraged at the insult, I ween —
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

"Let's show," said McClan, "to this Sassenach loon
That the bagpipes can play him a regular tune.
Let's see," said McClan, as he thoughtfully sat,
"'*In my Cottage*' is easy — I'll practice at that."

[1] Saxon — an Englishman.
[2] The furry pouch worn by Highlanders in front of the kilt.
[3] A short sword.

He blew at his "*Cottage,*" and blew with a will,
For a year, seven months, and a fortnight, until
(You'll hardly believe it!) McClan, I declare,
Elicited something resembling an air.

It was wild — it was fitful — as wild as the breeze —
It wandered about into several keys;
It was jerky, spasmodic, and harsh, I'm aware;
But still it distinctly suggested an air!

The Sassenach screamed, and the Sassenach danced,
He shrieked in his agony — bellowed and pranced,
And the maidens who gathered rejoiced at the scene,
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

"Hech gather, hech gather, hech gather around;
And fill a' ye lugs wi' the exquisite sound.
An air fra' the bagpipes — beat that if ye can:
Hurrah for Clonglocketty Angus McClan!"

The fame of his piping spread over the land:
Respectable widows proposed for his hand,
And maidens came flocking to sit on the green —
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

One morning the fidgetty Sassenach swore
He'd stand it no longer — he drew his claymore,[1]
And (this was, I think, extremely bad taste)
Divided Clonglocketty close to the waist.

Oh! loud were the wailings for Angus McClan,
Oh! deep was the grief for that excellent man —
The maids stood aghast at the horrible scene,
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

[1] A large, double-edged sword.

It sorrowed poor Pattison Corby Torbay
To find them "take on" in this serious way;
He pitied the poor little fluttering birds,
And solaced their souls with the following words: —

"Oh, maidens," said Pattison, touching his hat,
"Don't blubber, my dears, for a fellow like that;
Observe I'm a very superior man,
A much better fellow than Angus McClan."

They smiled when he winked and addressed them as "dears,"
And they all of them vowed, as they dried up their tears,
A pleasanter gentleman never was seen —
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

W. S. Gilbert

THE DARNED MOUNSEER

I shipped, d'ye see, in a Revenue sloop,
And, off Cape Finistere,
A merchantman we see,
A Frenchman, going free,
So we made for the bold Mounseer.
D'ye see?
We made for the bold Mounseer!

But she proved to be a Frigate — and she up with her ports,
And fires with a thirty-two!
It come uncommon near,
But we answered with a cheer,
Which paralysed the Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
Which paralysed the Parley-voo!

Then our Captain he up and he says, says he,
"That chap we need not fear, —
We can take her, if we like,
She is sartin for to strike,
For she's only a darned Mounseer,
D'ye see?
She's only a darned Mounseer!

But to fight a French fal-lal! — it's like hittin' of a gal —
It's a lubberly thing for to do;
For we, with all our faults,
Why, we're sturdy British salts,
While she's but a Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
A miserable Parley-voo!"

So we up with our helm, and we scuds before the breeze,
As we gives a compassionating cheer;
Froggee answers with a shout
As he sees us go about,
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer,
D'ye see?
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer!

And I'll wager in their joy they kissed each other's cheek
(Which is what them furriners do),
And they blessed their lucky stars
We were hardy British tars
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo!

W. S. Gilbert

DA GREATA BASABALL

O! greata game ees basaball
For yo'nga 'Merican.
But, O! my frand, ees not at all
Da theeng for Dagoman.[1]

O! lees'en, pleas', I tal to you
About wan game we play
W'en grass ees green, an' sky ees blue
An' eet ees holiday.
Spagatti say: "We taka treep
For play da ball, an' see
Wheech side ees ween da champanesheep
For Leetla Eetaly."
So off for Polo Groun' we go
Weeth basaball an' bat,
An' start da greata game, but, O!
Eet ees no feenish yat!
Spolatro ees da boss for side
Dat wait for catch da ball;
Spagatti nine ees first dat tried
For knock eet over wall.
An' so Spagatti com' for bat.
Aha! da greata man!
Da han's he got; so beeg, so fat,
Ees like two bonch banan'!

[1] Dagoman — The word "dago," as a nickname for Italians, came into use through the mistake of American sailors who associated "Diego," "Santiago" and other similar names and ports with Spaniards and Italians.

Spolatro peetch da ball, an' dere
  Spagatti's bat ees sweeng,
An' queeck da ball up een da air
  Ees fly like annytheeng.
You know een deesa game ees man
  Dat's call da "lafta-fiel'."
Wal, dees wan keep peanutta-stan'
  An' like for seettin' steell.
An' dough dees ball Spagatti heet
  Ees passa by hees way,
He don'ta care a leetla beet
  Eef eet ees gon' all day.

Da "centra-fielda man" — you know
  Dat's nex' to heem — he call:
"Hi! why you don'ta jompa, Joe,
  An' *run* an' gat da ball?"
But Joe he justa seetta steell
  Teell ball ees outa sight.
Dees mak' so mad da centra-fiel'
  He ees baygeen to fight.
Den com'sa nudder man — you see,
  I don'ta know hees name,
Or how you call dees man, but he
  Ees beeg man een da game.
He ees da man dat mak' da rule
  For play da gama right,
An' so he go for dose two fool
  Out een da fiel' dat fight.
He push da centra-fielda 'way —
  An' soocha names he call! —
An' den he grabba Joe an' say:
  "Com', *run* an' gat da ball."

But Joe he growl an' tal heem: "No!
Ees not for me at all.
Spagatti *heet* da ball, an' so
Spagatti *gat* da ball!"

O! greata game ees basaball
For yo'nga 'Merican.
But, O! my frand, ees not at all
Da theeng for Dagoman. *T. A. Daly*

THE CRUEL MOON

The cruel Moon hangs out of reach
Up above the shadowy beech.
Her face is stupid, but her eye
Is small and sharp and very sly.
Nurse says the Moon can drive you mad?
No, that's a silly story, lad!
Though she be angry, though she would
Destroy all England if she could,
Yet think, what damage can she do
Hanging there so far from you?
Don't heed what frightened nurses say:
Moons hang much too far away. *Robert Graves*

SONG AGAINST CHILDREN [1]

O the barberry bright, the barberry bright!
It stood on the mantelpiece because of the height.
Its stems were slender and thorny and tall
And it looked most beautiful against the grey wall.
But Michael climbed up there in spite of the height
And he ate all the berries off the barberry bright.

[1] From *Vigils* by Aline Kilmer. Copyright, 1921, George H. Doran Company, publishers.

O the round holly wreath, the round holly wreath!
It hung in the window with ivy beneath.
It was plump and prosperous, spangled with red
And I thought it would cheer me although I were dead.
But Deborah climbed on a table beneath
And she ate all the berries off the round holly wreath.

O the mistletoe bough, the mistletoe bough!
Could anyone touch it? I did not see how.
I hung it up high that it might last long,
I wreathed it with ribbons and hailed it with song.
But Christopher reached it, I do not know how,
And he ate all the berries off the mistletoe bough.

Aline Kilmer

SUFFERING

I sat down on a bumble bee
In Mrs. Jackson's yard.
I sat down on a bumble bee:
The bee stung good and hard.

I sat down on a bumble bee
For just the briefest spell,
And I had only muslin on,
As anyone could tell.

I sat down on a bumble bee,
But I arose again;
And now I know the tenseness of
Humiliating pain.

Nathalia Crane

THE MILK JUG

(The Kitten Speaks)

The Gentle Milk Jug blue and white
I love with all my soul —
She pours herself with all her might
To fill my breakfast bowl.

All day she sits upon the shelf,
She does not jump or climb —
She only waits to pour herself
When 'tis my supper-time.

And when the Jug is empty quite,
I shall not mew in vain,
The Friendly Cow, all red and white,
Will fill her up again.

Oliver Herford

DE APPILE-TREE *

Dat's a mighty quare tale 'bout de Appile-tree
In de Pa'dise gyarden whar Adam run free,
Whar de butterflies drunk honey wid ol' Mammy Bee.
Talk 'bout good times! I bet you he had 'em —
Adam —
Ol' man Adam un' de Appile-tree.

He woke one mornin' wid a pullin' at his sleeve;
He open one eye, an' dar wuz Eve;
He shuck her han', wid "Honey, don't you grieve!"
Talk 'bout good times! I bet you dey had 'em —
Adam —
Adam an' Eve un' de Appile-tree.

* See Note 27.

Den Eve tuck a bite er de Appile fruit,
An' Adam he bit, an' den dey scoot
(Dar's whar de niggers l'arned de quick callyhoot),
An' run an' hid behime de fig-tree.
Talk about troubles! I bet you dey had 'em—
Adam—
Adam an' Eve behime de fig-tree.

Dey had der frolics an' dey had der flings,
An' den atter dat der fun tuck wings.
Honey mighty sweet, but bees got stings.
Talk about hard times! I bet you dey had 'em—
Adam—
Adam an' Eve behime de fig-tree.

Kaze out er dat gyarden dey had fer ter skin,
Fer ter look fer de crack whar Satan crope in.
Dey s'arch fur an' wide, an' dey s'arch mighty well—
Eve she knowed, but she 'fuse fer ter tell.
Ol' Satan's trail wuz all rubbed out,
'Ceppin' a track er two whar he walked about.
Talk about troubles! Well, I bet you dey had 'em—
Adam—
Adam an' Eve an' all der kin.

An' when dey got back, de gate wuz shot,
An' dat wuz de pay what Adam got.
In dat gyarden he went no mo';
De overseer gi' 'im a shovel an' a hoe,
A mule an' plow, an' a swingletree.[1]

[1] Same as singletree or whiffletree; part of a horse's harness.

Talk about hard times! I bet you dey had 'em —
Adam —
An' all er his chillun, bofe slave an' free;
Dey had 'em —
Bekaze er de fruit er de Appile-tree.

An' de chillun er Adam, an' de chillun's kin,
Dey all got smeared wid de pitch er Sin;
Dey shot der eyes ter de big hereatter,
An' flung Sin aroun' wid a tur'ble splatter,
An' collogued wid Satan, an' dat what de matter.
An' troubles — well, I bet you dey had 'em —
Adam —
De chillun er Adam dat fergit ter pray —
Dey had 'em —
An' dey keep on a-had'n 'em down ter dis day!

But dat wa'n't de last er de Appile-tree,
Kaze she scatter her seeds bofe fur an' free,
An' dat's what de matter wid you an' me.
I knows de feelin's what fotch on de Fall,
De red Appile an' ol' Satan's call —
Lor' bless yo' soul, I know 'em all!
I'm kinder lopsided an' pidjin-toed,
But watch me keep in de middle er de road,
Kaze de troubles I got is a mighty big load.
Talk about troubles! I got 'em an' had 'em,
An' I know mighty well dat I cotch 'em fum Adam
An' de Appile-seeds what he scatter so free —
Adam —
Adam an' Eve an' de Appile-tree.

Joel Chandler Harris

LILLIPUT LEVEE

Where does Pinafore Palace stand?
Right in the middle of Lilliput-Land!
There the Queen eats bread-and-honey,
There the King counts up his money!

Oh, the Glorious Revolution!
Oh, the Provisional Constitution!
Now that the children, clever bold folks,
Have turned the tables upon the Old Folks!

Easily the thing was done,
For the children were more than two to one;
Brave as lions, quick as foxes,
With hoards of wealth in their money-boxes!

They seized the keys, they patrolled the street,
They drove the policeman off his beat,
They built barricades, they stationed sentries —
You must give the word, when you come to the entries!

They dressed themselves in the Riflemen's clothes,
They had pea-shooters, they had arrows and bows,
So as to put resistance down —
Order reigns in Lilliput-town!

They made the baker bake hot rolls;
They made the wharfinger send in coals,
They made the butcher kill the calf,
They cut the telegraph-wires in half.

They went to the chemist's, and with their feet
They kicked the physic all down the street;
They went to the school-room and tore the books,
They munched the puffs at the pastrycook's.

They sucked the jam, they lost the spoons,
They sent up several fire-balloons,
They let off crackers, they burnt a guy,
They piled a bonfire ever so high.

They offered a prize for the laziest boy,
And one for the most Magnificent toy;
They split or burnt the canes offhand,
They made new laws in Lilliput-land.

Never do to-day what you can
Put off till to-morrow, one of them ran;
Late to bed and late to rise
Was another law which they did devise.

They passed a law to have always plenty
Of beautiful things: we shall mention twenty:
A magic lantern for all to see,
Rabbits to keep, and a Christmas-tree,

A boat, a house that went on wheels,
An organ to grind, and sherry at meals,
Drums and wheelbarrows, Roman candles,
Whips with whistles let into the handles,

A real live giant, a roc to fly,
A goat to tease, a copper to shy,
A garret of apples, a box of paints,
A saw and a hammer, and no complaints.

Nail up the door, slide down the stairs,
Saw off the legs of the parlor chairs —
That was the way in Lilliput-land,
The children having the upper hand.

They made the Old Folks come to school,
And in pinafores, — that was the rule, —
Saying, *Eener-deener-diner-duss,*
Kattler-wheeler-whiler-wuss;

They made them learn all sorts of things
That nobody liked. They had catechisings;
They kept them in, they sent them down
In class, in school, in Lilliput-town.

O but they gave them tit-for-tat!
Thick bread-and-butter, and all that;
Stick-jaw pudding that tires your chin,
With the marmalade spread ever so thin!

They governed the clock in Lilliput-land,
They altered the hour or the minute-hand,
They made the day fast, they made the day slow,
Just as they wished the time to go.

They never waited for king or for cat;
They never wiped their shoes on the mat;
Their joy was great; their joy was greater;
They rode in the baby's perambulator!

There was a Levee in Lilliput-town,
At Pinafore Palace. Smith and Brown,
Jones and Robinson had to attend —
All to whom they cards did send.

Every one rode in a cab to the door;
Every one came in a pinafore;
Lady and gentleman, rat-tat-tat,
Loud knock, proud knock, opera hat!

The place was covered with silver and gold,
The place was as full as it ever could hold;
The ladies kissed her Majesty's hand,
Such was the custom in Lilliput-land.

His Majesty knighted eight or ten,
Perhaps a score, of the gentlemen,
Some of them short and some of them tall —
Arise, Sir What's-a-name What-do-you-call!

Conjuring tricks with the poker and tongs,
Riddles and forfeits, singing of songs;
One fat man, too fat by far,
Tried " Twinkle, twinkle, little star."

His voice was gruff, his pinafore tight,
His wife said, " Mind, dear, sing it right,"
But he forgot, and said Fa-la-la!
The Queen of Lilliput's own papa!

She frowned, and ordered him up to bed:
He said he was sorry; she shook her head;
His clean shirt-front with his tears was stained —
But discipline *had* to be maintained.

The Constitution! The Law! The Crown!
Order reigns in Lilliput-town!
The Queen is Jill, the King is John.
I trust the Government will get on.

William Brighty Rands

FABLES IN FOOLSCAP

FABLES IN FOOLSCAP

THE ENCHANTED SHIRT

Fytte ye Firste: wherein it shall be shown how ye Truth is too mightie a Drugge for such as be of feeble temper.

The King was sick. His cheek was red
And his eye was clear and bright;
He ate and drank with a kingly zest,
And peacefully snored at night.

But he said he was sick, and a king should know,
And doctors came by the score.
They did not cure him. He cut off their heads
And sent to the schools for more.

At last two famous doctors came,
And one was as poor as a rat,—
He had passed his life in studious toil,
And never found time to grow fat.

The other had never looked in a book;
His patients gave him no trouble,
If they recovered they paid him well,
If they died their heirs paid double.

Together they looked at the royal tongue,
As the King on his couch reclined;
In succession they thumped his august chest,
But no trace of disease could find.

The old sage said, "You're as sound as a nut."
"Hang him up," roared the King in a gale,
In a ten-knot gale of royal rage;
The other leech grew a shade pale;

But he pensively rubbed his sagacious nose,
And thus his prescription ran,—
The King will be well, if he sleeps one night
In the Shirt of a Happy Man.

Fytte ye Seconde: telleth of ye search for ye Shirte and how it was nighe founde but was notte, for reasons which are sayd or sung.

Wide o'er the realm the couriers rode,
And fast their horses ran,
And many they saw, and to many they spoke,
But they found no Happy Man.

They found poor men who would fain be rich,
And rich who thought they were poor;
And men who twisted their waists in stays,
And women that short hose wore.

They saw two men by the roadside sit,
And both bemoaned their lot;
For one had buried his wife, he said,
And the other one had not.

At last as they came to a village gate,
A beggar lay whistling there;
He whistled and sang and laughed and rolled
On the grass in the soft June air.

The weary couriers paused and looked
  At the scamp so blithe and gay;
And one of them said, "Heaven save you, friend!
  You seem to be happy to-day."

"O yes, fair sirs," the rascal laughed
  And his voice rang free and glad,
"An idle man has so much to do
  That he never has time to be sad."

"This is our man," the courier said;
  "Our luck has led us aright.
"I will give you a hundred ducats, friend,
  For the loan of your shirt to-night."

The merry blackguard lay back on the grass,
  And laughed till his face was black;
"I would do it, God wot," and he roared with the fun,
  "But I haven't a shirt to my back."

Fytte ye Thirde: Shewing how Hys Majestie ye King came at last to sleepe in a Happie Man his Shirte.

Each day to the King the reports came in
  Of his unsuccessful spies,
And the sad panorama of human woes
  Passed daily under his eyes.

And he grew ashamed of his useless life,
  And his maladies hatched in gloom;
He opened his windows and let the air
  Of the free heaven into his room.

And out he went in the world and toiled
In his own appointed way;
And the people blessed him, the land was glad,
And the King was well and gay.

John Hay

THE CAP THAT FITS

SCENE. — *A Salon with blue and white Panels. Outside, persons pass and re-pass upon a terrace.*

HORTENSE. ARMANDE. MONSIEUR LOYAL.

HORTENSE (*behind her fan*)

Not young, I think.

ARMANDE (*raising her eye-glass*)

And faded, too: —
Quite faded! Monsieur, what say you?

M. LOYAL

Nay, I defer to you. In truth,
To me she seems all grace and youth.

HORTENSE

Graceful? You think it? What, with hands
That hang like this (*with a gesture*).

ARMANDE

And how she stands!

M. LOYAL

Nay, I am wrong again. I thought
Her air delightfully untaught!

HORTENSE

But you amuse me —

M. LOYAL

Still her dress, —
Her dress at least, you *must* confess —

ARMANDE

Is odious simply! Jacotot
Did not supply that lace, I know;
And where, I ask, has mortal seen
A hat unfeathered!

HORTENSE

Edged with green!

M. LOYAL

The words remind me. Let me say
A Fable that I heard to-day.
Have I permission?

BOTH (*with enthusiasm*)

Monsieur, pray.

M. LOYAL

Myrtilla (lest a Scandal rise,
The Lady's Name I thus disguise),
Dying of Ennui, once decided, —
Much on Resource herself she prided, —
To choose a Hat. Forthwith she flies
On that momentous Enterprise.
Whether to Petit or Legros,
I know not: only this I know; —
Head-dresses then, of any Fashion,
Bore Names of Quality or Passion.

Myrtilla tried them, almost all;
"Prudence," she felt, was somewhat small;
"Retirement" seemed the Eyes to hide;
"Content," at once, she cast aside.
"Simplicity," — 'twas out of place;
"Devotion," — for an older face:
Briefly, Selection smaller grew,
"Vexatious! odious!" — none would do!
Then, on a sudden, she espied
One that she thought she had not tried;
Becoming, rather, — "edged with green," —
Roses in yellow, Thorns between.
"Quick! Bring me that!" 'Tis brought. "Complete,
Divine, Enchanting, Tasteful, Neat,"
In all the Tones. "And this you call — ?"
"'ILL-NATURE,' Madame. It fits all."

HORTENSE

A thousand thanks! So naïvely turned!

ARMANDE

So useful too, — to those concerned!
'Tis yours?

M. LOYAL

Ah, no, — some cynic wit's;
And called (I think) —
(*Placing his hat upon his breast.*)
"The Cap that Fits."

Austin Dobson

THE VAINGLORIOUS OAK AND THE MODEST BULRUSH [1] *

A bulrush stood on a river's rim,
And an oak that grew near by
Looked down with cold *hauteur* [2] on him,
And addressed him this way: "Hi!"
The rush was a proud patrician, and
He retorted, "Don't you know,
What the veriest boor should understand,
That 'Hi' is low?"

This cutting rebuke the oak ignored.
He returned, "My slender friend,
I will frankly state that I'm somewhat bored
With the way you bow and bend."
"But you quite forget," the rush replied,
"It's an art these bows to do,
An art I wouldn't attempt if I'd
Such boughs as you."

"Of course," said the oak, "in my sapling days
My habit it was to bow,
But the wildest storm that the winds could raise
Would never disturb me now.
I challenge the breeze to make me bend,
And the blast to make me sway."
The shrewd little bulrush answered, "Friend,
Don't get so gay."

* See Note 28.

[1] From *Fables for the Frivolous* by Guy Wetmore Carryl. Copyright, 1898, by Harper & Brothers.

[2] *hauteur* — this is French for haughtiness, snobbery, conceited pride.

And the words had barely left his mouth
When he saw the oak turn pale,
For, racing along south-east-by-south,
Came ripping a raging gale.
And the rush bent low as the storm went past,
But stiffly stood the oak,
Though not for long, for he found the blast
No idle joke.

* * * * * * * *

Imagine the lightning's gleaming bars,
Imagine the thunder's roar,
For that is exactly what eight stars
Are set in a row here for!
The oak lay prone when the storm was done,
While the rush, still quite erect,
Remarked aside, "What under the sun
Could one expect?"

And *The Moral,* I'd have you understand,
Would have made La Fontaine blush,
For it's this: Some storms come early, and
Avoid the rush!

Guy Wetmore Carryl

THE EMBARRASSING EPISODE OF LITTLE MISS MUFFET [1]

Little Miss Muffet discovered a tuffet,
(Which never occurred to the rest of us)
And, as 'twas a June day, and just about noonday,
She wanted to eat — like the best of us:

[1] From *Mother Goose for Grown-Ups* by Guy Wetmore Carryl. Copyright, 1900, Harper & Brothers.

Her diet was whey, and I hasten to say
  It is wholesome and people grow fat on it.
The spot being lonely, the lady not only
  Discovered the tuffet, but sat on it.

A rivulet gabbled beside her and babbled,
  As rivulets always are thought to do,
And dragon-flies sported around and cavorted,
  As poets say dragon-flies ought to do;
When, glancing aside for a moment, she spied
  A horrible sight that brought fear to her,
A hideous spider was sitting beside her,
  And most unavoidably near to her!

Albeit unsightly, this creature politely
  Said: "Madam, I earnestly vow to you,
I'm penitent that I did not bring my hat. I
  Should otherwise certainly bow to you."
Though anxious to please, he was so ill at ease
  That he lost all his sense of propriety,
And grew so inept that he clumsily stept
  In her plate — which is barred in Society.

This curious error completed her terror;
  She shuddered, and growing much paler, not
Only left tuffet, but dealt him a buffet
  Which doubled him up in a sailor-knot.
It should be explained that at this he was pained:
  He cried: "I have vexed you, no doubt of it!
Your fist's like a truncheon." "You're still in my lunch-
    eon,"
Was all that she answered. "Get out of it!"

And *The Moral* is this: Be it madam or miss
To whom you have something to say,
You are only absurd when you get in the curd
But you're rude when you get in the whey!

Guy Wetmore Carryl

HENRY KING

The Chief Defect of Henry King
Was chewing little bits of String.
At last he swallowed some which tied
Itself in ugly Knots inside.

Physicians of the Utmost Fame
Were called at once; but when they came
They answered, as they took their Fees,
"There is no Cure for this Disease.

"Henry will very soon be dead."
His Parents stood about his Bed
Lamenting his Untimely Death,
When Henry, with his Latest Breath,

Cried, "Oh, my Friends, be warned by me,
That Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch, and Tea
Are all the Human Frame requires. . . ."
With that, the Wretched Child expires.

Hilaire Belloc

LEETLA GIORGIO WASHEENTON *

You know w'at for ees school keep out
Dees holiday, my son?
Wal, den, I gona tal you 'bout
Dees Giorgio Washeenton.

* See Note 29.

Wal, Giorgio was leetla keed
  Ees leeve long time ago,
An' he gon' school for learn to read
  An' write hees nam', you know.
He moocha like for gona school
  An' learna hard all day,
Baycause he no gat time for fool
  Weeth bada keeds an' play.
Wal, wan cold day w'en Giorgio
  Ees steell so vera small,
He start from home, but he ees no
  Show up een school at all!
O! my! hees Pop ees gatta mad
  An' so he tal hees wife:
"Som' leetla boy ees gon' feel bad
  To-day, you bat my life!"
An' den he grab a beega steeck
  An' gon' out een da snow
An' lookin' all aroun' for seek
  Da leetla Giorgio.
Ha! w'at you theenk? Firs' theeng he see
  Where leetla boy he stan',
All tangla up een cherry tree,
  Weeth hatchet een hees han'.
"Ha! w'at you do?" hees Pop he say,
  "W'at for you busta rule
An' stay away like dees for play
  Eenstead for gon' to school?"
Da boy ees say: "I no can lie,
  An' so I speaka true.
I stay away from school for try
  An' gat som' wood for you.

I theenka deesa cherry tree
  Ees gooda size for chop,
An' so I cut heem down, you see,
  For justa help my Pop."
Hees Pop he no can gatta mad,
  But looka please' an' say:
"My leetla boy, I am so glad
  You taka holiday."

Ees good for leetla boy, you see,
  For be so bright an' try
For help hees Pop; so den he be
  A granda man bimeby.
So now you gatta holiday
  An' eet ees good, you know,
For you gon' do da sama way
  Like leetla Giorgio.
Don't play so mooch, but justa stop,
  Eef you want be som' good,
An' justa help your poor old Pop
  By carry home some wood;
An' mebbe so like Giorgio
  You grow for be so great
You gona be da Presidant
  Of dese Unita State'.

T. A. Daly

HOW BRER TARRYPIN LEARNED TO FLY

Brer Tarrypin tired er prom'nadin' roun',
An' he lay in de sun right flat on de groun';
His foots wuz col', an' his eyes wuz red,
An' it look like sump'in done bunged up his head;

But he watch Brer Buzzard a-sailin' in de sky,
An' he wisht fum his heart dat he could fly —
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

He frown an' he grunt, he grunt an' he groan,
He sniffle an' snuffle, he wheeze an' he moan;
He drapt a big tear in de acorn-cup,
An' de bug run out, he gobble 'im up;
Brer Buzzard flew'd, an' he flew'd mighty high,
He flop his wings an' he wink his eye —
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

He see Brer Tarrypin layin' flat,
An' he chuckle ter hisse'f, "Oh-ho! look at dat!
It's a mighty funny place fer ter make a bed,
An' he may be sick, an' he may be dead!"
So he drap down slow, an' he drap down sly,
But Tarrypin watchin' wid his red eye —
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Buzzard he lit a little up de slope,
An' hit de gait call de buzzard-lope,
An' den Brer Tarrypin tuck in his head
An' lay des like he done gone ter bed.
Brer Buzzard he holler, "He! he-hi!"
An' Tarrypin 'spon', "Ah-yi! ay-yi!"
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

"You keep yo-se'f shot up in yo' shell,"
Brer Buzzard 'low, "but I hope you er well?"
Brer Tarrypin say he feelin' ez smart
Ez what a man kin wid a swelled-up heart,

An' a liver all blue, an' a blood-red eye;
An' Tarrypin 'spon', " Ah-yi! ah-yi! "
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

" Better git de doctor! " Brer Buzzard say;
" He'll kyo yo, sho, ef dey's any way."
" I done been saw 'im," Brer Tarrypin 'low,
" An' he up an' tol' me dat my onliest how
Is to fin' somebody dat'll tote me high
An' turn me loose so I'll l'arn how ter fly " —
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Brer Buzzard he say, " Why, bless you, chile!
You kin count on me! " an' he smole a smile.
" When it comes ter heft you er right smart chunk,
But I speck I kin tote you " — an' den he wunk.
" I'll tote you low, an' I'll tote you high;
I'll tote you past, an' I'll tote you by " —
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

He ruffle his fedders, an' he flop his wings,
Wid " Dis is de trouble dat frien'ship brings;
But I'll take it all an' ax fer mo',
Ef so be I kin git you ter go."
Brer Tarrypin study, an' look at de sky,
Kaze his heart wuz sot on l'arnin' ter fly —
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Down on his hunkers Brer Buzzard squot,
An' on his back Brer Tarrypin got;
'Twuz slip an' fall, but he got on,
An' de nex news you know dey bofe wuz gone!

A-sailin' low, an' a-sailin' high,
A-sailin' fur, an' a-sailin' nigh —
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

" Now, how shill I l'arn? " Brer Tarrypin say.
Brer Buzzard 'spon', " I'll show you de way.
I'm a-flyin' high, but I'll start down,
Den you turn loose an' sail all roun'."
Brer Tarrypin say — an' he shot his eye —
" Ef we go much higher we'll 'sturb de sky! "
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Tarrypin turn loose an' down he come,
Wid a *blip* an' a *blap* an' a *blim-blam-blum!*
He come wid a squeal, he come wid a squall —
Dey ain't nobody y'ever had sech a fall!
An' a mighty good reason: he wuz up so high
Dat when he hit de groun' he wuz dead, mighty nigh —
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Buzzard he foller fer ter see it done well,
Wid " La, ol' frien' ! it seem like you fell!
An' all you hatter do wuz ter flop yo' wings! "
Tarrypin groan; he say, " By jings!
I know one thing, an' dat ain't two —
I know one thing wid my fil-a-ma-loo!
I know one thing, an' I know it right —
I know how ter fly, but I dunner how ter light!
Sump'n' n'er tol' me ez I sail in de sky,
' L'arn how ter light 'fo' you l'arn how ter fly! ' "
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Joel Chandler Harris

FABLE

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter "Little Prig";
Bun replied,
"You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together,
To make up a year
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry.
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

THE TREE *

I am four monkeys.
One hangs from a limb,
tail-wise,
chattering at the earth;
another is cramming his belly with cocoanut;

* See Note 30.

the third is up in the top branches,
quizzing the sky;
and the fourth —
he's chasing another monkey.

How many monkeys are you?

Alfred Kreymborg

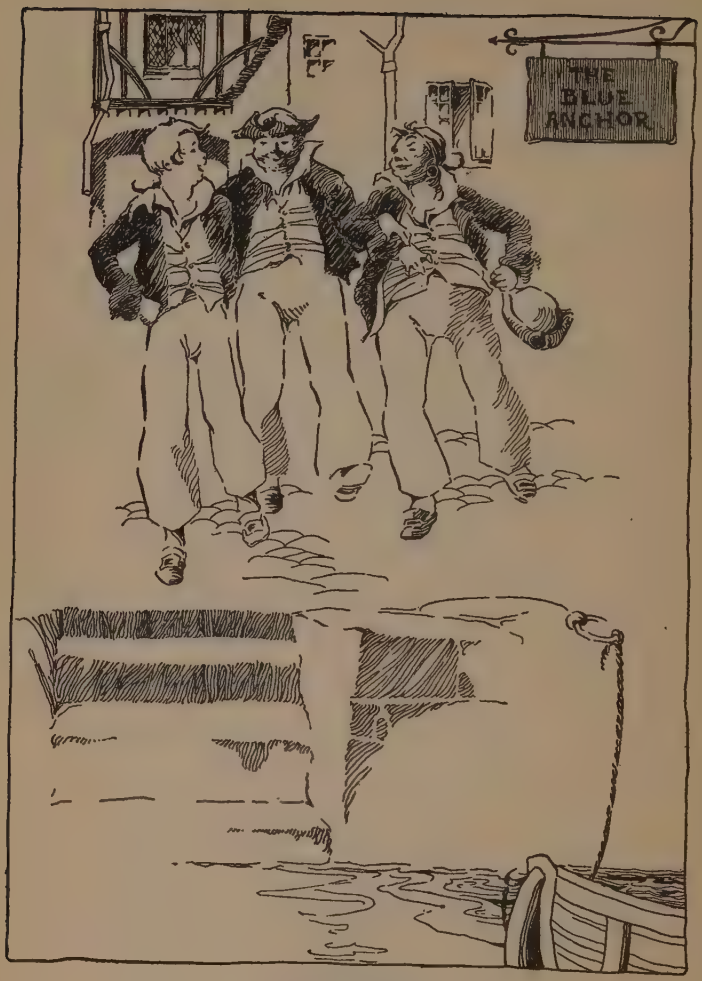
VOICES

O, there were lights and laughter
  And motions to and fro
Of people as they enter
  And people as they go. . . .

And there were many voices
  Vying at the feast,
But mostly I remember
  Yours — who spoke the least.

Witter Bynner

RHYME WITHOUT REASON



LITTLE BILLEE

TOPSY-TURVY WORLD

If the butterfly courted the bee,
And the owl the porcupine;
If churches were built in the sea,
And three times one was nine;
If the pony rode his master,
If the buttercups ate the cows,
If the cats had the dire disaster
To be worried, sir, by the mouse;
If Mamma, sir, sold the baby
To a gypsy for half a crown;
If a gentleman, sir, was a lady,—
The world would be Upside-down!
If any or all of these wonders
Should ever come about,
I should not consider them blunders,
For I should be Inside-out:

Chorus

Baa-baa, black wool
Have you any sheep?
Yes, sir, a packfull,
Creep, mouse, creep!
Four-and-twenty little maids
Hanging out the pie,
Out jumped the honey-pot,
Guy Fawkes, Guy!

Cross latch, cross latch,
Sit and spin the fire;
When the pie was opened,
The bird was on the brier!

William Brighty Rands

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT *

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat,
They took some honey, and plenty of money,
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
"O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl!
How charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:
But what shall we do for a ring?"
They sailed away for a year and a day,
To the land where the Bong-tree grows,
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood,
With a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.

* See Note 31.

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

Edward Lear

LITTLE BILLEE

There were three sailors of Bristol city
Who took a boat and went to sea.
But first with beef and captain's biscuits
And pickled pork they loaded she.

There was gorging Jack and guzzling Jimmy,
And the youngest he was little Billee.
Now when they got as far as the Equator
They'd nothing left but one split pea.

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,
"I am extremely hungaree."
To gorging Jack says guzzling Jimmy,
"We've nothing left, us must eat we."

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,
"With one another we shouldn't agree!
There's little Bill, he's young and tender,
We're old and tough, so let's eat he.

"Oh, Billy, we're going to kill and eat you,
So undo the button of your chemie."
When Bill received this information
He used his pocket-handkerchie.

"First let me say my catechism,
Which my poor mammy taught to me."
"Make haste, make haste," says guzzling Jimmy,
While Jack pulled out his snickersnee.

So Billy went up to the main-topgallant mast,
And down he fell on his bended knee.
He scarce had come to the twelfth commandment
When up he jumps. "There's land I see:

"Jerusalem and Madagascar,
And North and South Amerikee:
There's the British flag a-riding at anchor,
With Admiral Napier, K. C. B."

So when they got aboard the Admiral's
He hanged fat Jack and flogged Jimmee;
But as for little Bill he made him
The captain of a Seventy-three!

William Makepeace Thackeray

THE SNARK *

(*From "The Hunting of the Snark"*)

"Come, listen, my men, while I tell you again
The five unmistakable marks
By which you may know, wheresoever you go,
The warranted genuine Snarks.

* See Note 32.

"Let us take them in order. The first is the taste,
Which is meagre and hollow, but crisp:
Like a coat that is rather too tight in the waist,
With a flavour of Will-o-the-wisp.

"Its habit of getting up late you'll agree
That it carries too far, when I say
That it frequently breakfasts at five-o'clock tea,
And dines on the following day.

"The third is its slowness in taking a jest.
Should you happen to venture on one,
It will sigh like a thing that is deeply distressed:
And it always looks grave at a pun.

"The fourth is its fondness for bathing-machines,
Which it constantly carries about,
And believes that they add to the beauty of scenes —
A sentiment open to doubt.

"The fifth is ambition. It next will be right
To describe each particular batch:
Distinguishing those that have feathers, and bite,
From those that have whiskers, and scratch.

"For, although common Snarks do no manner of harm,
Yet I feel it my duty to say
Some are Boojums — " The Bellman broke off in alarm,
For the Baker had fainted away.

Lewis Carroll

THE BAKER'S TALE

(*From "The Hunting of the Snark"*)

They roused him with muffins — they roused him with ice —
They roused him with mustard and cress —
They roused him with jam and judicious advice —
They set him conundrums to guess.

When at length he sat up and was able to speak,
His sad story he offered to tell;
And the Bellman cried "Silence! Not even a shriek!"
And excitedly tingled his bell.

There was silence supreme! Not a shriek, not a scream,
Scarcely even a howl or a groan,
As the man they called "Ho!" told his story of woe
In an antediluvian tone.

"My father and mother were honest, though poor —"
"Skip all that!" cried the Bellman in haste.
"If it once becomes dark, there's no chance of a Snark —
We have hardly a minute to waste!"

"I skip forty years," said the Baker, in tears,
"And proceed without further remark
To the day when you took me aboard of your ship
To help you in hunting the Snark.

"A dear uncle of mine (after whom I was named)
Remarked, when I bade him farewell —"
"Oh, skip your dear uncle," the Bellman exclaimed,
As he angrily tingled his bell.

"He remarked to me then," said that mildest of men,
"'If your Snark be a Snark that is right:
Fetch it home by all means — you may serve it with greens
And it's handy for striking a light.

"'You may seek it with thimbles — and seek it with care;
You may hunt it with forks and hope;
You may threaten its life with a railway-share;
You may charm it with smiles and soap —'"

("That's exactly the method," the Bellman bold
In a hasty parenthesis cried,
"That's exactly the way I have always been told
That the capture of Snarks should be tried!")

"'But oh, beamish nephew, beware of the day,
If your Snark be a Boojum! For then
You will softly and suddenly vanish away,
And never be met with again!'

"It is this, it is this that oppresses my soul,
When I think of my uncle's last words;
And my heart is like nothing so much as a bowl
Brimming over with quivering curds!

"It is this, it is this —" "We have had that before!"
The Bellman indignantly said.
And the Baker replied, "Let me say it once more.
It is this, it is this, that I dread!

"I engage with the Snark — every night after dark —
In a dreamy delirious fight:
I serve it with greens in those shadowy scenes,
And I use it for striking a light:

"But if ever I meet with a Boojum, that day,
In a moment (of this I am sure),
I shall softly and suddenly vanish away —
And the notion I cannot endure!"

Lewis Carroll

THE YAK

As a friend to the children commend me the Yak.
You will find it exactly the thing:
It will carry and fetch, you can ride on its back,
Or lead it about with a string.

The Tartar who dwells on the plains of Thibet
(A desolate region of snow)
Has for centuries made it a nursery pet,
And surely the Tartar should know!

Then tell your papa where the Yak can be got,
And if he is awfully rich
He will buy you the creature — or else he will not.
(I cannot be positive which.)

Hilaire Belloc

THE LION

The Lion, the Lion, he dwells in the waste,
He has a big head and a very small waist;
But his shoulders are stark, and his jaws they are grim,
And a good little child will not play with him.

Hilaire Belloc

THE GLAD YOUNG CHAMOIS

How lightly leaps the youthful chamois [1]
From rock to rock and never misses!
I always get all cold and clamois
When near the edge of precipisses.

Confronted by some yawning chasm,
He bleats not for his sire or mamois
(That is, supposing that he has'm)
But yawns himself — the bold young lamois!

He is a thing of beauty always;
And when he dies, a gray old ramois,
Leaves us his horns to deck our hallways;
His skin cleans teaspoons, soiled or jamois.

I shouldn't like to be a chamois,
However much I am his debtor.
I hate to run and jump; why, damois,
'Most any job would suit me bebtor!

Burges Johnson

CONTRARY MARY

You ask why Mary was called contrary?
Well, this is why, my dear:
She planted the most outlandish things
In her garden every year;

[1] Of course you know that, no matter how it is spelled, *chamois* is pronounced *shammy*.

She was always sowing the queerest seed,
And when advised to stop,
Her answer was merely, "No, indeed —
Just wait till you see my crop!"

And here are some of the crops, my child
(Although not nearly all):
Bananarcissus and cucumberries,
And violettuce small;
Potatomatoes, melonions rare,
And rhubarberries round,
With porcupineapples prickly-rough
On a little bush close to the ground.

She gathered the stuff in mid-July
And sent it away to sell —
And now you'll see how she earned her name,
And how she earned it well.
Were the crops hauled off in a farmer's cart?
No, not by any means,
But in little June-buggies and automobeetles
And dragonflying-machines!

Nancy Byrd Turner

A MEDLEY

Little Jack Horner sat in the corner
Eying the pies all day,
While little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet
Eating her curds and whey.

Old Mother Hubbard then went to the cupboard
To give him a pie and bun,
When out walked a spider and sat down beside her —
So *this* little pig had none!

Michael Lewis

LIMERATOMY [1]

The Face

As a beauty I'm not a great star,
There are others more handsome by far,
But my face, I don't mind it,
Because I'm behind it —
'Tis the folks in the front that I jar.

The Hands

The hands they were made to assist
In supplying the features with grist.
There are only a few —
As a rule about two —
And are hitched to the end of the wrist.

The Smile

No matter how grouchy you're feeling,
You'll find the smile more or less healing.
It grows in a wreath
All around the front teeth —
Thus preserving the face from congealing.

Anthony Euwer

[1] Limeratomy — a word invented by the author, combining *limerick* and *anatomy*.

FIVE LIMERICKS BY FAMOUS WRITERS

In Quebec

There was once a small boy in Quebec
Stood buried in snow to his neck.
When asked: "Are you friz?"
He said: "Yes, I is,
But we don't call this cold in Quebec."

Rudyard Kipling

An Eggstravagance

The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher
Called a hen a most elegant creature.
The hen, pleased with that,
Laid an egg in his hat, —
And thus did the hen reward Beecher!

Oliver Wendell Holmes

The Vicar of Bray

An indolent vicar of Bray
His roses allowed to decay;
His wife, more alert,
Bought a powerful squirt,
And said to her spouse, "Let us spray."

Langford Reed

An Unrhymed Limerick [1]

There was an old man of St. Bees,
Who was stung in the arm by a wasp,
When asked, "Does it hurt?"
He replied, "No, it doesn't,
I'm *so* glad it wasn't a hornet."

W. S. Gilbert

Wear and Tear

There was an old man of the Cape,
Who made himself garments of crêpe.
When asked, "Do they tear?"
He replied, "Here and there,
But they're perfectly splendid for shape!"

Robert Louis Stevenson

NONSENSE RHYMES

I

On DIGITAL EXTREMITIES:
A Poem, and a Gem It Is!

I'd Rather have Fingers than Toes;
I'd Rather have Ears than a Nose;
And As for my Hair,
I'm Glad it's All There;
I'll be Awfully Sad, when it Goes!

[1] See the first limerick by Edward Lear, on page 285.

II

THE FLOORLESS ROOM: A Novel Sort Of Argument Without Support.

I Wish that my Room had a Floor!
I don't so Much Care for a Door,
    But this Crawling Around
    Without Touching the Ground
Is getting to be Quite a Bore!

III

THE SUNSET: Picturing the Glow It Casts upon a Dish of Dough.

The Sun is Low, to Say the Least,
    Although it is Well-Red;
Yet, Since it Rises in the Yeast,
    It Should be Better Bred!

IV

THE WINDOW PAIN: a Theme Symbolic, Pertaining to the Melon Colic.

The Window has Four Little Panes;
    But One have I —
The Window Pains are in its Sash;
    I Wonder Why!

V

THE PURPLE COW'S Projected Feast:
Reflections on a Mythic Beast,
Who's quite Remarkable, at Least.

I never saw a Purple Cow,
I never hope to see one;
But I can tell you, anyhow,
I'd rather see than be one!

Gelett Burgess

NONSENSE LIMERICKS

There was an Old Man in a tree
Who was horribly bored by a Bee;
When they said, "Does it buzz?"
He replied, "Yes, it does!
It's a regular brute of a Bee."

*

There was a Young Lady of Norway,
Who casually sat in a Doorway;
When the door squeezed her flat,
She exclaimed, "What of that?"
This courageous Young Lady of Norway.

*

There was an Old Man who said, "How
Shall I flee from this horrible Cow?
I will sit on this stile,
And continue to smile,
Which may soften the heart of that Cow."

*

There was an Old Man of Cape Horn,
Who wished he had never been born;
So he sat on a Chair
Till he died of despair,
That dolorous Man of Cape Horn.

*

There was a Young Lady whose eyes
Were unique as to color and size;
When she opened them wide,
People all turned aside,
And started away in surprise.

*

There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, "It is just as I feared! —
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!"

Edward Lear

THREE FAMOUS LIMERICKS

I

There was a young lady of Niger
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger;
They returned from the ride
With the lady inside,
And the smile on the face of the tiger.

II

The poor benighted Hindoo,
He does the best he kindo;
He sticks to caste
From first to last;
For pants he makes his skindo.

III

A lady there was of Antigua,
Who said to her spouse, "What a pig you are!"
He answered, "My queen,
Is it manners you mean,
Or do you refer to my figuah?"

Cosmo Monkhouse

FOUR TRICKY LIMERICKS

I

A tutor who tooted the flute
Tried to tutor two tooters to toot.
Said the two to the tutor,
"Is it harder to toot or
To tutor two tooters to toot?"

II

A canner, exceedingly canny,
One morning remarked to his granny,
"A canner can can
Anything that he can,
But a canner can't can a can, can he?"

III

There was a young fellow named Tait,
Who dined with his girl at 8.08;
But I'd hate to relate
What that fellow named Tait
And his tête-a-tête ate at 8.08.

IV

Said a bad little youngster named Beauchamp: *
"Those jelly-tarts, how shall I reauchamp?
To my parents I'd go,
But they always say 'No,'
No matter how much I beseauchamp."

Carolyn Wells

FIVE PUZZLERS [1]

She frowned and called him Mr.,
Because in sport he kr.;
And so in spite
That very night
This Mr. kr. sr.

*

An unpopular youth of Cologne,
With a pain in his stomach did mogne.
He heaved a great sigh
And said, "I would digh,
But the loss would be only my ogne."

*

* (Pronounced "Beecham"!)

[1] Here is where you must use your cleverness and imagination.

There was a young lady named Wemyss,[1]
Who, it semyss, was troubled with dremyss.
  She would wake in the night,
  And, in terrible fright,
Shake the bemyss of the house with her scremyss.

*

There was a young servant at Drogheda,[2]
Whose mistress had deeply annogheda.
  She proceeded to swear
  In language so rare
That afterwards no one emplogheda.

*

There was a young poet
of Trinity
who, though he could trill
                like a linnet
he could never complete any
poem with feet —
Saying "Idiots! Can't you see
that what I'm specializing in
happens to be
Free
                Verse.

[1] Believe it or not, but in England the name Wemyss is pronounced "Weems"!

[2] And in Ireland, Drogheda is pronounced — But no! You must guess this one without any help from me.

A DELIGHTFUL DOZEN

There once was a pious young priest
Who lived almost wholly on yeast;
"For," he said, "it is plain
We must all rise again,
And I want to get started, at least."

*

When you think of the hosts without No.
Who are slain by the deadly cuco.,[1]
It's quite a mistake
Of such food to partake,
It results in a permanent slo.

*

The bottle of perfume that Willie sent
Was highly displeasing to Millicent;
Her thanks were so cold
They quarrelled, I'm told,
Through that silly scent Willie sent Millicent.

*

A fly and a flea in a flue
Were imprisoned, so what could they do?
Said the fly, "Let us flee!"
"Let us fly!" said the flea,
So they flew through a flaw in the flue.

*

There was a faith-healer of Deal
Who said, "Although pain isn't real,

[1] Now, if No. represents the word Number, cuco. — But this is almost *too* simple.

If I sit on a pin
And it punctures my skin,
I dislike what I *fancy* I feel."

*

There once was a man of Calcutta
Who spoke with a terrible stutter.
At breakfast he said,
"Give me b-b-bread,
And b-b-b-b-b-b-b-butter."

*

There was an old man of Blackheath,
Who sat on his set of false teeth.
Said he, with a start,
"O Lord, bless my heart!
I've bitten myself underneath!"

*

There was a young man of Bengal
Who went to a fancy-dress ball,
He went, just for fun,
Dressed up as a bun,
And a dog ate him up in the hall.

*

There was an old man of Peru,
Who dreamt he was eating his shoe,
He woke in the night
In a terrible fright,—
And found it was perfectly true!

*

There was a young lady of Lynn,
Who was so uncommonly thin

That when she essayed
To drink lemonade,
She slipped through the straw and fell in.

*

There was an old man of Tarentum,
Who gnashed his false teeth till he bent 'em.
When they asked him the cost
Of what he had lost,
He replied, "I can't say, for I rent 'em."

*

There was a young man who was bitten
By forty-two cats and a kitten,
Cried he, "It is clear
My end is quite near,
No matter; I'll die like a Briton!"

Anonymous

THE LION

CROONS AND LULLABIES

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe —
Sailed on a river of crystal light,
Into a sea of dew.
'Where are you going, and what do you wish?'
The old moon asked the three.
'We have come to fish for the herring-fish
That live in this beautiful sea;
Nets of silver and gold have we!'
Said Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,
As they rocked in the wooden shoe,
And the wind that sped them all night long,
Ruffled the waves of dew.
The little stars were the herring-fish
That lived in that beautiful sea —
'Now cast your nets wherever you wish —
But never afeared are we;'
So cried the stars to the fishermen three:
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
For the fish in the twinkling foam —
Then down from the sky came the wooden shoe,
Bringing the fishermen home;

'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
As if it could not be;
And some folks thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea —
But I shall name you the fishermen three:
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed.
So shut your eyes while mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock in the misty sea,
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three:
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

Eugene Field

LULLABY *

Bedtime's come fu' little boys.
Po' little lamb.
Too tiahed out to make a noise,
Po' little lamb.
You gwine t' b'have to-morrer sho'?
Yes, you tole me dat befo',
Don't you fool me, chile, no mo',
Po' little lamb.

You been bad de livelong day,
Po' little lamb.
Th'owin' stones an' runnin' 'way,
Po' little lamb.

* See Note 33.

My, but you's a-runnin' wil',
Look jes' lak some po' folks' chile;
Mam' gwine whup you atter while,
  Po' little lamb.

Come hyeah! you mos' tiahed to def,
  Po' little lamb.
Played yo'se'f clean out o' bref,
  Po' little lamb.
See dem han's now — sich a sight!
Would you evah b'lieve dey's white?
Stan' still 'twell I wash 'em right,
  Po' little lamb.

Jes' cain't hol' yo' haid up straight,
  Po' little lamb.
Hadn't oughter played so late,
  Po' little lamb.
Mammy don' know whut she'd do,
Ef de chillun's all lak you;
You's a caution now fu' true,
  Po' little lamb.

Lay yo' haid down in my lap,
  Po' little lamb.
Y'ought to have a right good slap,
  Po' little lamb.
You been runnin' roun' a heap.
Shet dem eyes an' don't you peep.
Dah now, dah now, go to sleep,
  Po' little lamb.

Paul Laurence Dunbar

SWEET AND LOW

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

Alfred Tennyson

THE SHIP O' BED

When I was young, I had a bed
That was no bed at all,
But a good great ship with seven masts
And seamen brown and tall.

Each seaman had a lantern white
To light us past the bars,
And all of them knew old sea-songs,
And their eyes were like the stars.

The stars rolled millions overhead,
But seven were made fast,
The brightest and the best of all,
Upon each mighty mast.

Four Captains had my starry bed,
I named them in my prayer,
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
With golden beards and hair.

But the Pilot, whom I loved the best
Because he called me *Sir*
And played the games I liked to play,
Was good Saint Christopher.

Out we broke our sails which seemed
Like patches that the moon
Makes upon a quiet floor
When crickets sing their tune.

And we were off to seek a Dame
Who would be kind to me
And turn each sailor's heart to gold,
The Lady of the Sea!

I think she lived beyond the place
Where fish grow crowns of gold
And where there are so many tales
That all are never told.

The wind blew very wonderful,
Throwing foam like snow,
Yet always let us hear the call
Of sea-chicks peeping low.

Out the yellow beards all flew
  Of Matthew, Luke and John,
But Mark's flew longest of them all
  And was coloured like the dawn.

The fish took wing and played about
  Each opal sail and sang
Of goose-girls and the currant-fruits
  That on the bun-trees hang.

When flowers came above the waves
  We knew the port was nigh;
We could see a silver town
  Rising up hard by.

Down came our sails, each sailor bowed
  And plucked his cap to me. . . .
'Twas day, and there my Mother stood,
  The Lady of the Sea!

Robert P. Tristram Coffin

YOUNG AND OLD

When all the world is young, lad,
  And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
  And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
  And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
  And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down;
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among:
God grant you find one face there,
You loved when all was young.

Charles Kingsley

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness or farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

Alfred Tennyson

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN! *

(In Memory of Abraham Lincoln)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up — for you the flag is flung — for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths — for you the shores acrowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

* See Note 34.

Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

Walt Whitman

REQUIEM

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie:
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you 'grave for me:
Here he lies where he long'd to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Robert Louis Stevenson

UP–HILL

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin?
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labor you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

NOD

Softly along the road of evening,
In a twilight dim with rose,
Wrinkled with age, and drenched with dew
Old Nod, the shepherd, goes.

His drowsy flock streams on before him,
Their fleeces charged with gold,
To where the sun's last beam leans low
On Nod the shepherd's fold.

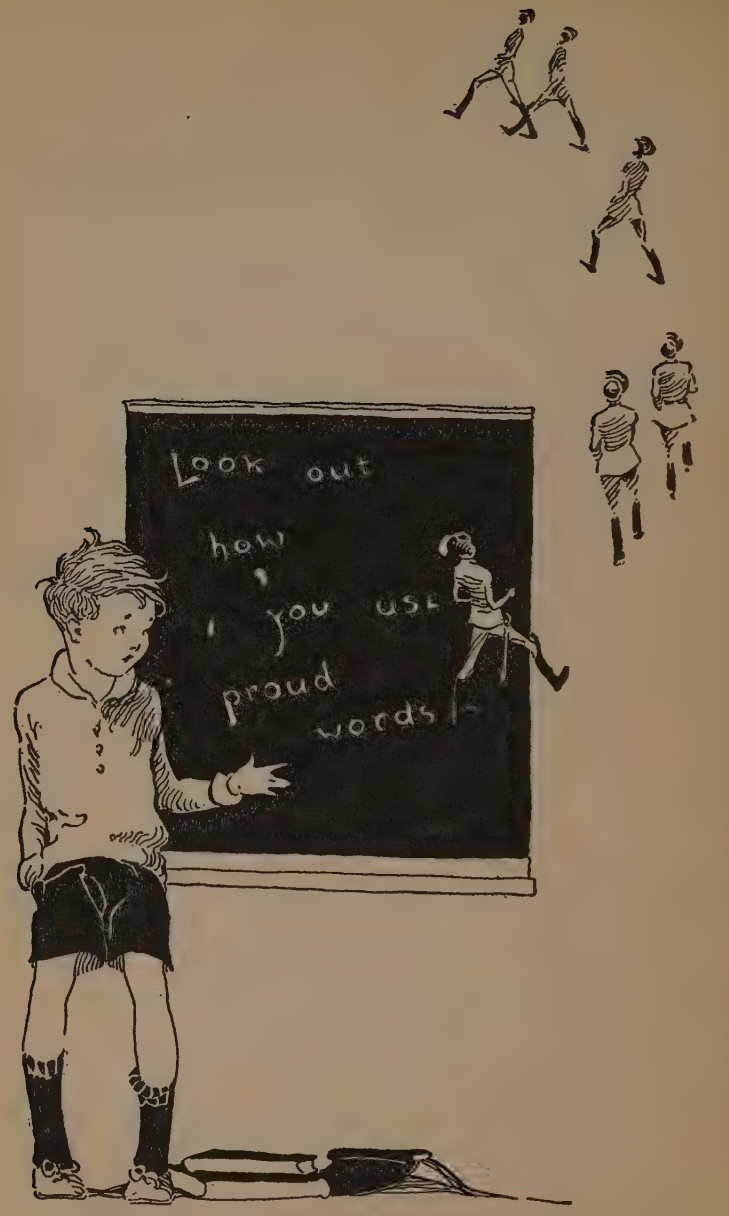
The hedge is quick and green with briar,
From their sand the conies creep;
And all the birds that fly in heaven
Flock singing home to sleep.

His lambs outnumber a noon's roses,
Yet, when night's shadows fall,
His blind old sheep-dog, Slumber-soon,
Misses not one of all.

His are the quiet steeps of dreamland,
The waters of no-more-pain,
His ram's bell rings 'neath an arch of stars,
'Rest, rest, and rest again.'

Walter de la Mare

STARS TO HITCH TO



PRIMER LESSON

IN AFTER DAYS

In after days when grasses high
O'ertop the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honored dust,
I shall not question or reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind's sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain were I
That some one then should testify,
Saying — "He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none? — Then let my memory die
In after days!

Austin Dobson

THE SONG OF HONOR *

(*Condensed Version*)

I climbed a hill as light fell short,
And rooks came home in scramble sort,
And filled the trees and flapped and fought
And sang themselves to sleep;

* See Note 35.

An owl from nowhere with no sound
Swung by and soon was nowhere found,
I heard him calling half-way round,
Holloing loud and deep;
A pair of stars, faint pins of light,
Then many a star, sailed into sight,
And all the stars, the flower of night,
Were round me at a leap;
To tell how still the valleys lay
I heard a watchdog miles away, —
And bells of distant sheep.

I heard no more of bird or bell,
The mastiff in a slumber fell,
I stared into the sky,
As wondering men have always done
Since beauty and the stars were one
Though none so hard as I.
It seemed, so still the valleys were,
As if the whole world knelt at prayer,
Save me and me alone;
So pure and wide that silence was
I feared to bend a blade of grass,
And there I stood like stone.

There, sharp and sudden, there I heard —
Ah! some wild lovesick singing bird
Woke singing in the trees?
The nightingale and babble-wren
Were in the English greenwood then,
And you heard one of these?
The babble-wren and nightingale
Sang in the Abyssinian vale
That season of the year!

Yet, true enough, I heard them plain,
I heard them both again, again,
As sharp and sweet and clear
As if the Abyssinian tree
Had thrust a bough across the sea,
Had thrust a bough across to me
With music for my ear!

I heard them both, and oh! I heard
The song of every singing bird
That sings beneath the sky,
And with the song of lark and wren
The song of mountains, moths and men
And seas and rainbows vie!
I heard the universal choir,
The Sons of Light, exalt their Sire
With universal song,
Earth's lowliest and loudest notes,
Her million times ten million throats
Exalt Him loud and long,
And lips and lungs and tongues of Grace
From every part and every place
Within the shining of His face,
The universal throng.

I heard the hymn of Being sound
From every well of honor found
In human sense and soul:
The song of poets when they write
The testament of Beauty sprite
Upon a flying scroll,
The song of painters, when they take
A burning brush for Beauty's sake
And limn her features whole —

The song of men divinely wise
Who look and see in starry skies
Not stars so much as robins' eyes,
And when these pale away,
Hear flocks of shiny Pleiades
Among the plums and apple trees
Sing in the summer day —

The song of all both high and low
To some blest vision true,
The song of beggars when they throw
The crust of pity all men owe
To hungry sparrows in the snow,
Old beggars hungry too —
The song of kings of kingdoms when
They rise, above their fortune, Men,
And crown themselves anew —

The song of courage, heart and will
And gladness in a fight,
Of men who face a hopeless hill
With sparkling and delight,
The bells and bells of song that ring
Round banners of a cause or king
From armies bleeding white —

* * * * *

I heard it all, each, every note
Of every lung and tongue and throat,
Ay, every rhythm and rhyme
Of everything that lives and loves
And upward, ever upward moves
From lowly to sublime!

Earth's multitudinous Sons of Light,
I heard them lift their lyric might
With each and every charming sprite
That lit the sky that wondrous night
As far as eye could climb!

I heard it all, I heard the whole
Harmonious hymn of Being roll
Up through the chapel of my soul
And at the altar die,
And in the awful quiet then
Myself I heard, Amen, Amen,
Amen I heard me cry!
I heard it all and then although
I caught my flying senses, oh,
A dizzy man was I!
I stood and stared; the sky was lit,
The sky was stars all over it;
I stood, I knew not why,
Without a wish, without a will,
I stood upon that silent hill
And stared into the sky until
My eyes were blind with stars and still
I stared into the sky.

Ralph Hodgson

FOURTH OF JULY ODE

I

Our fathers fought for Liberty,
They struggled long and well,
History of their deeds can tell —
But did they leave us free?

II

Are we free from vanity,
Free from pride, and free from self,
Free from love of power and pelf,
From everything that's beggarly?

III

Are we free from stubborn will,
From low hate and malice small,
From opinion's tyrant thrall?
Are none of us our own slaves still?

IV

Are we free to speak our thought,
To be happy, and be poor,
Free to enter Heaven's door,
To live and labor as we ought?

V

Are we then made free at last
From the fear of what men say,
Free to reverence To-day,
Free from the slavery of the Past?

VI

Our fathers fought for liberty,
They struggled long and well,
History of their deeds can tell —
But *ourselves* must set us free.

James Russell Lowell

THE ARROW AND THE SONG

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

THE EXAMPLE *

Here's an example from
  A Butterfly;
That on a rough, hard rock
  Happy can lie;
Friendless and all alone
On this unsweetened stone.

Now let my bed be hard,
  No care take I;
I'll make my joy like this
  Small Butterfly;
Whose happy heart has power
To make a stone a flower.

W. H. Davies

* See Note 36.

HAPPY WIND

Oh, happy wind, how sweet
  Thy life must be!
The great, proud fields of gold
  Run after thee:
And here are flowers, with heads
  To nod and shake;
And dreaming butterflies
  To tease and wake.
Oh, happy wind, I say,
To be alive this day.

W. H. Davies

A PSALM OF LIFE

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
  Life is but an empty dream! —
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
  And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
  And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
  Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
  Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
  Find us farther than today.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
  And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
  Funeral marches to the grave.

STARS TO HITCH TO

In the world's broad field of battle,
  In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
  Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
  Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act, — act in the living Present!
  Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
  We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
  Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
  Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
  Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
  With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
  Learn to labor and to wait.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

IF *

If you can keep your head when all about you
  Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
  But make allowance for their doubting too:

* See Note 37.

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
  Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
  And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream — and not make dreams your master;
  If you can think — and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
  And treat those two impostors just the same:
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
  Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
  And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
  And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
  And never breathe a word about your loss:
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
  To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
  Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
  Or walk with Kings — nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
  If all men count with you, but none too much:
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
  With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
  And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling

PRIMER LESSON

Look out how you use proud words.
When you let proud words go, it is not
    easy to call them back.
They wear long boots, hard boots;
    they walk off proud; they can't
    hear you calling —
Look out how you use proud words.

Carl Sandburg

HATE

My enemy came nigh,
And I
Stared fiercely in his face.
My lips went writhing back in a grimace,
And stern I watched him with a narrow eye.
Then, as I turned away, my enemy,
That bitter heart and savage, said to me:
" Some day, when this is past,
When all the arrows that we have are cast,
We may ask one another why we hate,
And fail to find a story to relate.
It may seem to us then a mystery
That we could hate each other."
    Thus said he,
And did not turn away,
Waiting to hear what I might have to say,
But I fled quickly, fearing if I stayed
I might have kissed him as I would a maid.

James Stephens

EPIC

"Little dew
On a leaf,
What are you?
Know you grief?

"Little dust
On a thorn,
Wherefore must
We be born?

"Little breath
Of an air,
After death
You blow — where?"

Said the dew,
Said the dust,
Said the blue:
"We can trust."

Virginia Moore

THE ENDURING

If the autumn ended
Ere the birds flew southward,
If in the cold with weary throats
They vainly strove to sing,
Winter would be eternal;
Leaf and bush and blossom
Would never once more riot
In the spring.

If remembrance ended
When life and love are gathered,
If the world were not living
Long after one is gone,
Song would not ring, nor sorrow
Stand at the door in evening;
Life would vanish and slacken,
Men would be changed to stone.

But there will be autumn's bounty
Dropping upon our weariness,
There will be hopes unspoken
And joys to haunt us still;
There will be dawn and sunset
Though we have cast the world away,
And the leaves dancing
Over the hill.

John Gould Fletcher

THUNDERSTORMS

My mind has thunderstorms,
  That brood for heavy hours:
Until they rain me words,
  My thoughts are drooping flowers
And sulking, silent birds.

Yet come, dark thunderstorms,
  And brood your heavy hours;
For when you rain me words,
  My thoughts are dancing flowers
And joyful singing birds.

W. H. Davies

LEISURE

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like stars at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

W. H. Davies

THE TUFT OF FLOWERS

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the levelled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been, — alone,

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim over night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly-weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

Robert Frost

RECESSIONAL *

God of our fathers, known of old —
Lord of our far-flung battle line —
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies —
The Captains and the Kings depart —
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

* See Note 38.

Far-called our navies melt away —
  On dune and headland sinks the fire —
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
  Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power we loose
  Wild tongues that have not thee in awe —
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
  Or lesser breeds without the Law —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard —[1]
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding calls not Thee to guard.
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

Amen.

Rudyard Kipling

A PRAYER

Teach me, Father, how to go
Softly as the grasses grow;
Hush my soul to meet the shock
Of the wild world as a rock;
But my spirit, propt with power,
Make as simple as a flower.

[1] reeking tube and iron shard: guns and bullets.

Let the dry heart fill its cup,
Like a poppy looking up;
Let life lightly wear her crown,
Like a poppy looking down.

Teach me, Father, how to be
Kind and patient as a tree.
Joyfully the crickets croon
Under shady oak at noon;
Beetle, on his mission bent,
Tarries in that cooling tent.
Let me, also, cheer a spot,
Hidden field or garden grot—
Place where passing souls can rest
On the way and be their best.

Edwin Markham

THE HEROIC HEART

CLIMB

THE HEROIC HEART

OPPORTUNITY

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream: —
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung above the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel —
That blue blade that the king's son bears, — but this
Blunt thing — ! " he snapt and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

Edward Rowland Sill

COLUMBUS [1]

Behind him lay the grey Azores,
Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
Before him only shoreless seas.

[1] Permission to use granted by the Harr Wagner Publishing Company, publishers of Joaquin Miller's Complete Works.

The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say?"
"Why, say 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
My men grow ghastly wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say at break of day,
'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said,
"Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and say"—
He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
"This mad sea shows his teeth to-night.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Admiral, say but one good word:
What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
"Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck —
A light! a light! a light! a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on! "

Joaquin Miller

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP *

I

You know we French stormed Ratisbon;
A mile or so away
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

II

Just as perhaps he mused, "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader, Lannes,
Waver at yonder wall," —
Out 'twixt the battery smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound,
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

* See Note 39.

III

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
  And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
  You hardly could suspect —
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
  Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
  Was all but shot in two.

IV

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace,
  We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
  And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
  Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed: his plans
  Soared up again like fire.

V

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
  Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
  When her bruised eaglet breathes:
"You're wounded!" — "Nay," the soldier's pride
  Touched to the quick, he said,
"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,
  Smiling, the boy fell dead.

Robert Browning

CLIMB

My shoes fall on the house-top that is so far beneath me,
I have hung my hat forever on the sharp church spire,
Now what shall seem the hill but a moment of surmounting,
The height but a place to dream of something higher!

Wings? Oh, not for me. I need no other pinions
Than the beating of my heart within my breast;
Wings are for the dreamer with a bird-like longing,
Whose dreams come home at eventide to nest.

The timid folk beseech me, the wise ones warn me,
They say that I shall never grow to stand so high;
But I climb among the hills of cloud and follow vanished lightning,
I shall stand knee-deep in thunder with my head against the sky.

Tiptoe, at last, upon a pinnacle of sunset,
I shall greet the death-like evening with laughter from afar;
Nor tremble in the darkness nor shun the windy midnight,
For by the evening I shall be a star.

Winifred Welles

MEASURE ME, SKY!

Measure me, sky!
Tell me I reach by a song
Nearer the stars;
I have been little so long.

Weigh me, high wind!
What will your wild scales record?
Profit of pain,
Joy by the weight of a word.

Horizon, reach out!
Catch at my hands, stretch me taut,
Rim of the world:
Widen my eyes by a thought.

Sky, be my depth,
Wind, be my width and my height,
World, my heart's span;
Loneliness, wings for my flight!

Leonora Speyer

FOR THOSE WHO FAIL *

"All honor to him who shall win the prize,"
The world has cried for a thousand years;
But to him who tries and who fails and dies,
I give great honor and glory and tears.

O great is the hero who wins a name,
But greater many and many a time
Some pale-faced fellow who dies in shame,
And lets God finish the thought sublime.

O great is the man with a sword undrawn,
And good is the man who refrains from wine;
But the man who fails and yet fights on,
Lo, he is the twin-brother of mine!

Joaquin Miller

* See Note 40.

INVICTUS *

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever Gods there be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced or cried aloud,
Under the bludgeonings [1] of chance
My head is bloody but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade;
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll —
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

W. E. Henley

* See Note 41.
[1] bludgeonings: blows.

A FEW AFTER-WORDS

A FEW AFTER-WORDS

This is strictly between us. Like the Foreword, these few After-Words are little pieces of a talk that we might have if we ever meet each other any place outside of the pages of this book. Even if we have to have this talk in print rather than in person, it is *our* talk — and if your parents or your uncles or your teachers "listen in" they do so at their peril! Grown-ups — I myself happen to be one of them — are curious creatures; they know that "Life is real, Life is earnest," but they forget that Life is also a great many other things. I am afraid that some of them will frown and shake their heads if they overhear us. And so, rather than offend them, I invite them — to stay away. All of this, as I said before, is between you and me and the printer.

In the first place — (*are you sure we are alone?*) — I don't believe that poetry can be "taught." Or rather, I ought to say, poetry *should not* be taught. A poem should be read — out loud, to get the full flavor of it. Poetry can be an indoor sport or a sharing of your own pleasure with someone else. It can be made an adventure by discovering a new poem or finding something new in an old one. But when a poem becomes a Lesson in Grammar or is used (Heaven forbid!) as a Word-Study, it ceases to be a poem at all and becomes a combination of a cross-word puzzle and a problem in arithmetic. I once heard a well-known educator make a speech on "How to Read a Poem

in the Class Room." He spoke for a solid hour — a very solid hour — and he showed how much could be learned from reading by "system." One by one he outlined a poem's different "values"; he showed how a poem could be read for (a) its idea, (b) its structure, (c) its "underlying principle," (d) its "significance to our own experiences," (e) its "relation to other reading," and so on. He talked about poetry for sixty minutes and he never once mentioned the word "enjoyment." And it is, first of all, *enjoyment* that we must have if we are to care at all for poetry — or, for that matter, any other art.

If I say that pleasure must be your guide, I do not mean that the same thing will be pleasing to everyone. In this collection there will be — I hope — some poems you will want to read over and over again; there will be — I fear — some that you will not want to read at all. And this is one of the things I want to whisper in your ear: don't force yourself to like any of these poems just because they happen to be printed in this book. Maybe you will like some of them better later on; others you may like less as you grow up. In any case, do not be ashamed of your choice. To care for a poem completely, you must fall in love with it at first sight. You cannot follow the model of a certain instructor who, at the beginning of the term said, "We will read each poem three times — first for Plot, second for Syntax, and third for Beauty." You can imagine that there was not much "Beauty" left when the students had picked the poems to pieces for the third time!

Finally (*are you still listening?*), I don't believe it is even necessary for you to be able to define every single word in order to feel the delight of verse. When you listen to music, you don't ask what every single note *means*. So, to a great extent, the *melody* of a poem may affect us

almost as much as the *meaning*. About the best advice to readers — and writers — of poetry might be given by reversing the words of the Duchess in "Alice in Wonderland": "Take care of the sounds and the sense will take care of itself." This is not to be taken to mean that poetry is only a kind of word-music. Poetry not only can sing, but it can paint pictures, tell stories, describe characters, make you laugh, carry you to distant times and places, and (if you will let it!) be a guide to life.

But I am talking too much — and from your yawns I can see that you agree with me. Well, I will say no more about what poetry is or may be. I will let you find that out for yourself — possibly you already have found it out in these pages. You won't mind, I know, if I look over your shoulder while you read. Once in a while I may even interrupt your reading to point out some interesting fact which may be new to you. That, at any rate, is what the following *Notes* will try to do. If, on the other hand, you wish to be quite alone, and don't like to be interrupted, there is a very simple way of treating these *Notes*. Just skip them.

L. U.

NOTES

NOTE 1

The Year's at the Spring ..... *page* 9

This is sung by Pippa, a peasant girl who is the heroine in the play "Pippa Passes." Some day, most likely, you will read the whole of this play, which was written by one of the greatest of English poets. Before you read it, I hope you will become acquainted with other poems by Browning (you will find three more famous ones in this volume), poems which have sung their way into the hearts of many thousands. Among the others — and you can find them in most collections — are the courageous "Hervé Riel," the merry "Pied Piper of Hamelin," the exquisite "Home Thoughts from Abroad," and the galloping "Cavalier Tunes."

NOTE 2

Spring Song ..... *page* 10

This poem was written by little Hilda Conkling at the age of six. Hilda was born in the Catskill Mountains in 1910, so she is not quite so little now. Long before she could write, almost from the time that she could babble, she "talked" tiny poems to her mother (who is also a poet) and Mrs. Conkling put these poetic scraps down on paper. When Hilda was not quite ten, her first book, *Poems by a Little Girl,* was published. Her second volume, *Shoes of the Wind,* contains many poems that you will enjoy and quite a few that I think will startle you with their beauty.

NOTE 3

God's World ..... *page* 17

The author of this poem is one of the most famous lyric poets of today. (What? Oh, the word "lyric" is taken from an old Greek word; in ancient times, poems used to be sung or chanted to the accompaniment of a lyre. Therefore, a lyric poet is one whose poetry sings.) Edna St. Vincent Millay is known wherever English is spoken, but this exquisite poem — full of an intense love of earth and its beauties — was written when she was an unknown girl (nineteen years of age) in a village on the coast of Maine. Her longer

poem, "Renascence" (which you will find in most collections of modern American poetry), is one of the most thrilling revelations you have ever read. It is a poem you can come back to again and again. Many people admire her "Ballad of the Harp-Weaver" (in *Yesterday and Today*) even more. This ballad is a tale of a mother's love and her sacrifice for her young son. Why not read both poems and see which *you* like better?

NOTE 4

Velvet Shoes ..... *page* 20

Did you ever read such a *white* poem? Notice how many words and phrases bring out the silver purity of the snow. And what an atmosphere of quiet these lines create! It is so hushed that you can hardly read the lines above a whisper. You can actually feel yourself pressing the soft snow, treading it down as if you really had on "velvet shoes." It would be interesting, by the way, to compare this poem by Elinor Wylie, whose stories are as brightly tinted as her verse, with Walter de la Mare's "Silver."

NOTE 5

The Song of the Ungirt Runners ..... *page* 36

Charles Hamilton Sorley, who wrote this poem, was a young English poet, born in 1895, who died when he was just twenty. Had he lived, it seems likely that he would have been one of the most prominent of living poets; he was wise beyond his years and his serious poetry has the nobility which many older poets might envy. "The Song of the Ungirt Runners" is one of his most invigorating pieces. The very lines have a swing and stride of their own. It is no particular goal or "cause" which the poet celebrates; he delights — as we do — in the pure joy of speed and active muscles: "we run *because we like it* through the broad bright land."

NOTE 6

The Day is Done ..... *page* 54

Of course you already have heard the name of the author of this poem, so it is unnecessary for me to tell you that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow is the most famous of the great group known as "The New England poets," a group which existed about the time of the Civil War. Other notable members were Emerson, Whittier, Lowell, and Holmes, but Longfellow's work is not only the best but by far the most popular. Besides his poems in this collection there are a

score of others which will appeal to you — possibly you know some of them already. "Evangeline," "Hiawatha," and the "Courtship of Miles Standish" are almost as well known as the nursery rhymes on which we were all brought up. And there are a dozen shorter poems — I leave you to discover them for yourselves — which have become "classics."

NOTE 7

The Janitor's Boy ..... *page* 77

"The Janitor's Boy," as well as other poems by its author in this volume, was written by Nathalia Crane, about whom there has been so much discussion. Nathalia Clara Ruth Crane — to give her her full name — was born in New York City in 1913 and began to write when she was about eight years old, typing out her verses on her own little machine. At the age of nine she sent some of her lines to the poetry editor of a paper, who printed them because of their own charm, never dreaming that a child had composed them. In 1924, when Nathalia was a little over ten, her first book, *The Janitor's Boy and Other Poems* (containing the three poems in this collection), appeared. Her second volume, *Lava Lane,* was published in the fall of 1925. After this second book had been greatly praised by the critics, a literary storm broke out in the newspapers. Many people granted that Nathalia might have written some of the lighter and more humorous pieces, but they refused to believe that any child could have produced the remarkably serious poetry credited to her. Nevertheless, most of the critics — including myself — believed that Nathalia was, as she claimed to be, the author of her work. It is true that many of her ideas and phrases are "advanced"; it is also true that many of her poems are finer than the poetry of most grown-ups. But the music which the boy Mozart wrote at ten is better than the music of most "mature" composers; Pamela Bianco, known all over the world, drew some of her greatest designs at thirteen; and there is today a Polish boy-wonder who, as a nine-year-old chess-player, has beaten most of the experts. But, after all, the important thing is not whether a girl by the name of Nathalia Crane has written this winsome and sometimes exquisite poetry. The important thing is that it has been written.

NOTE 8

In Praise of Johnny Appleseed ..... *page* 99

Although the story of "Johnny Appleseed" has become a legend and the details of his life and wanderings will never be known, there seems no doubt that this fabled seed-sower actually existed. His

name, according to the authorities, was John Chapman; he was born in New England (some say in Massachusetts) about 1775; he came West when he was a young man and noticed the lack of fruit trees throughout the country. Then began his long pilgrimage. Leaving the Alleghenies on foot, he walked alone through the wilderness — which, later, was to become the great mid-West — dropping seeds of apple, pear and cherry wherever he went, planting orchards in the midst of forests so that future generations might enjoy their fruits. He feared nothing, not even the Indians, who, at first, were suspicious of him, later regarded him as unbalanced, and finally, when he lived among them, accepted him as their friend. He died, far from civilized surroundings, in a savage spot which is now Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1843 or 1845.

New incidents are continually being told of "Johnny Appleseed," new episodes are still being "discovered" about him. No treatment of the legend, however, is more vivid and at the same time more imaginative than this poem by Vachel Lindsay. It is a half humorous, half heroic re-telling of our first and (with the exception of Uncle Remus) our only American myth.

NOTE 9

The Runaway ..... *page* 111

Robert Frost, as you may have heard, is the most prominent of the *new* New England poets. (When you grow older, you will hear more about him and the other present-day New England writers, Edwin Arlington Robinson and Amy Lowell.) Someone has said his poetry is carved out of his native granite, and it is true that you can feel the rocky hills of New Hampshire in his lines. But Robert Frost has also written many smaller and less "stony" verses; his lyrics (do you remember the word?) of farm and field are as intimate as a personal talk. Could there be a more delightful invitation than "The Pasture" which you will find at the beginning of the section, *Common Things?* And in "The Runaway" can't you picture the frightened little colt who has never seen snow before and runs back and forth trying to escape these queer white flies? If you haven't already read "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (in the section *Places*) you might read it now. It is about nothing in particular — just a tired man and a tired horse going slowly home at nightfall — but you can see every snowflake settling upon the boughs, you can even hear how the silence of the woods is made greater by the sound of the little harness bells. And how soothing the rhymes are. This poem, I sometimes think, might be called "a New England lullaby."

NOTE 10

Dolphins in Blue Water ..... *page* 119

This poem was written by Amy Lowell, one of the best known of recent American poets, who died in 1925. Later on, when you study modern American literature, you will hear much more of her. She had many interesting ideas about the making of poetry and became a great influence in her day. Although she wrote many poems in rhyme and a regular meter — which means a poem with a steady beat, like a marching-tune — she was fondest of "free verse." Free verse, instead of having a single steady pulse, has many different beats. This poem is an excellent example. The varied line-lengths make us read the poem in a sharp and rapid manner — giving the very effect of dolphins leaping in and out of the waves. Many readers feel that free verse can describe things better than the older kind of poetry; other people miss the regular rhythm. What is your opinion — if you have one?

NOTE 11

Disenchantment ..... *page* 135

This poem is supposed to represent the feelings of an American boy walking alone at twilight in a German forest. (I ought to know what the boy is *supposed* to feel because — I might as well admit it — I wrote the poem.) As a child, this boy had been brought up on Grimm's "Household Tales" and many other fairy stories, so that when he visited Germany and entered one of its dark and mysterious woods, he was quite ready to be enchanted. He was even ready — and hoping — to be somewhat frightened. Little bits of old legends mixed themselves up in his mind and, as the dusk grew deeper, he seemed to become one of those youngest sons to whom something always happens. He waited . . . waited . . . But the rest of it you will have to read for yourself.

(For those of you who care about such things, I might confide that most of this poem is not written in "true" rhymes but in a sort of "half-rhyme" which some people have called "assonance.")

NOTE 12

Words and Music ..... *pages* 145 *to* 152

In this section the music is even more important than the words. These are songs, the "notes" of which are golden vowels and chiming consonants. Poems like the "Ode," "To Helen," "A Birthday," and "Blow, Bugle, Blow" are pure melodies — and, although they

all mean something definite and deep, the meaning is the lesser part, like the libretto or "book" of an opera. "We are the music-makers," cries the poet, speaking for all his fellow-singers.

NOTE 13

Dick Said ..... *page* 163

Dick actually said these lines when he was about seven years old, one day when he was living in the country with his parents. He had just heard a few Bible stories, had been to his first opera (which was the fairy tale of "Hänsel and Gretel"), was thinking of Christmas, and it was getting near seven o'clock, his bed-time. All of these things became very much mixed in his little mind, and so it is not strange that his ideas of Heaven were also a little confused. At any rate he told these thoughts to his father — who happens to be me [1] — and his father added the rhymes, several commas, and one exclamation point. . . . And here you are!

NOTE 14

Ballade of Blue China ..... *page* 165

The word "ballade" looks very much like the word "ballad" but the two are very different. A *ballad* (without the "e") is a story-poem that can be either long or short; its principal feature is that it tells some sort of tale in rather simple measures. A *ballade* is always the same in length and structure and is one of the strictest of the forms which originated in France in the Middle Ages. If you are interested in the way poems are made, you will notice that all the verses of the *ballade* (with the "e") are built on the same set of rhymes, and — to make it harder — no two rhymes are repeated anywhere in the poem. The "envoy" (conclusion) is a sort of half-verse with the same rhyme scheme, and the *last line* of each verse (called *the refrain* or chorus) is the same throughout. (Another poem in the same form is the "Ballade of a Ship" on page 28.) But before you study the form of this poem — if you study it at all — enjoy these verses for their own sake.

NOTE 15

I wonder What It Feels Like to Be Drowned ..... *page* 168

This poem, by a young English writer of great charm, may need a little explanation. Most poets get their inspiration walking along

[1] (To be grammatical — and can anything be more important than grammar — I suppose the "me" should be "I.")

a country road, wandering in the woods, or standing silently beneath the stars. In this poem, however, Robert Graves is thinking his thoughts sitting in a bath-tub. And his bath-tub, I hasten to say, is not the long, white-enamelled, oblong trough in which *we* bathe. In common with most Englishmen who live in the country, — and Robert Graves lives in a fairy-like cottage in the tiny village of Islip — his bath-tub is really a tub; nothing more than a small, round, tin affair in which he must crouch in a few inches of water. That is why his knees seem like an "island rising from the steamy seas." Instead of a modern electric light, he has a candle beside him like "a tall lightship" and the sides of the little tub seem to him like "mighty cliffs." Although the thought of all these things makes the poet wonder "what it feels like to be drowned," I have a notion that he is not very frightened by the idea.

NOTE 16

Little Breeches .....*page* 171

They say that this actually happened out west during the gold rush in the days of the famous 'Forty-Niners. (1849 was the date when gold was discovered in California and everyone rushed out to make his fortune overnight.) The author, John Hay, never admitted whether the poem was founded on an incident in real life or whether he had made up the entire story. Hay was a very famous man in his day, one of the greatest Secretaries of State we have ever had — and, being a noted diplomat, I suppose he was afraid to admit anything.

NOTE 17

The Horse Thief .....*page* 177

This, as I scarcely need tell you, never could have happened. The beginning of the story seems actual enough and at first you will be tempted to believe that the tale is "true." A man is crawling through the long grass at night. He has committed some wrong (just what we do not know) and has escaped from his pursuers. But his enemies are tracking him down and there seems little hope for him. Suddenly he sees, white in the moonlight, a dazzling and beautifully built horse. His own filly had broken her foreleg and he had been forced to shoot her. Here is a way out. He flings his lariat, ropes the wild steed, leaps on the shining mustang . . . and finds he is mounted on Pegasus, the fabled wingèd horse of the poets! It may be a little difficult for you to believe in the wild ride which followed, how the mythical animal flew among the stars, carried its rider shoulder to shoulder with the constellations, and

finally threw him back to earth. But, unless you care absolutely nothing for adventures, I am sure you will enjoy this impossible ride — just because it is impossible.

NOTE 18

The Ballad of East and West ..... *page* 184

This is one of the most famous story-poems of our day. Its author, Rudyard Kipling, is most likely known to you because of his many other works. (After you have read the poems by Kipling in this book, you should look up his "Mandalay," "Fuzzy-Wuzzy," "Gunga-Din" and half a dozen more which may be found in many collections.) If you do not already know the *Just-So Stories* and *The Jungle Books,* you have a great treat in store for you. The little boy, Mowgli, who appears as the young hero of the jungle, is one of the most delightful lads in all literature, and when you are a little older you will delight in Kim, who is a sort of older cousin of Mowgli, wandering in the great country of India which Kipling knows so well.

"The Ballad of East and West" needs no words from me. It tells its own vivid story of how "two strong men," one from England and one a native-born Indian, differing in every way, find a common brotherhood when they meet face to face. I do not think you will have any trouble with the queer names which may seem difficult at first, but which are really not as hard as they look. They are all names of different people and places in India and are pronounced just the way they are spelled. It might be interesting to compare the story of this race with the equally rapid ride in Browning's "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix."

NOTE 19

The Blessèd Damozel ..... *page* 192

Some one — I sha'n't tell you her name — advised me to leave this poem out. "It is," she insisted, "much too sad, and young people can't bear sadness." But she was a lady who had been sad most of her life and could not listen to any music or poetry which was not gay. But you and I, who are happy most of the time, can stand a drop of sadness once in a while. Besides, this poem is so lovely — its expression is so tender and its words are so musical — that we almost forget that the story concerns a girl who has died, waiting in Heaven until her lover comes to join her.

NOTE 20

How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix...page 198

Many people have tried to find some event in history to correspond with this poem. But there is none. No one will ever know what good news was being brought from one tiny town in the Netherlands to another. (Lokeren, Boom, Düffeld, Mecheln, Aerschot, Hasselt, Looz, and Dalhem are all towns on the ninety-mile road between Ghent and Aix.) Browning does not tell his readers what the city of Aix was supposed to be saved from; he was far more interested in the *effect* of his galloping lines. He wanted to make us actually hear the hoof-beats of the three horses, to feel the excitement as two of them fall dead by the way, and the steed, Roland, reaches the goal alone. If there is another poem which races along at such a breakneck pace, I don't know where it is. If you find one. be sure to let me know its name.

NOTE 21

The Charge of the Light Brigade .....page 200

Unlike "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," this poem tells an actual historic event. From 1854 to 1856 the little Greek fishing village of Balaklava was the headquarters of the British army during the Crimean War. On October 25, 1854, 600 crack cavalry troopers went forth against a huge army. The English horsemen knew that the battle was hopeless; they were surrounded by a far greater force with "cannon to right of them and cannon to left of them." But they did not hesitate. "Someone had blundered," some officer had given the wrong command or had received false information. But on they charged, "into the Valley of Death," giving the world one of its most glorious examples of heroism in history.

NOTE 22

The Highwayman .....page 208

This is not only one of the best liked but one of the most thrilling of modern ballads. (I did explain, didn't I, that a ballad has been defined as "a simple, spirited poem in short stanzas in which some popular story is vividly told"?) There are many reasons, it seems to me, why "The Highwayman" is such a favorite. First of all, the beat and swing of its lines are so decided that every reader is carried along as if he were actually seated on the same horse with the daring hero. Second, the picture element in the poem is so pronounced that every detail stands out boldly and the

reader seems to be carried back to a scene in old England a hundred years ago. Last, and most important, the tale itself — the story of a dashing adventurer and his sweetheart who died by her own hand in an effort to save him — will always affect us, especially the epilogue with its meeting of the ghostly lovers whose bond was so great that it brought them together even after death.

NOTE 23

The Lost Shoe ..... *page* 217

This, also, is a kind of ballad, but since it appears in the section called *Laughing Legends,* you will not take it too seriously. Strangely enough, the author of these skipping verses, Walter de la Mare, is one of the most serious poets alive. In a few years, I hope you will read his magical volume *The Listeners* and the remarkable novel *Memoirs of a Midget.* "Nod" and one or two of his other haunting melodies are in this collection — as you probably have discovered. But Walter de la Mare is many kinds of a poet; when he stops being serious — and this happens frequently — he writes some of the most delicious nursery and nonsense verses imaginable. If you doubt this, dip into *Peacock Pie,* which is a sort of modern Mother Goose — *plus!*

NOTE 24

Robinson Crusoe's Story ..... *page* 220

Here again we are not to take the story-teller too seriously. In fact, I advise you not to take him seriously at all. The author, Charles E. Carryl, was a great lover of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and he had read the famous *Alice* books to his little boy some dozens of times until the child knew them by heart. Then the father determined to furnish new entertainment for little Guy and he wrote *Davy and the Goblin,* which was supposed to be an account of what happened after reading *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* More than 20,000 copies of this book were sold and its success was due not only to the madcap mixture of real people, old stories turned up and down, the queer confession of Robin Hood (who turns out to be the father of little Red Riding Hood!) butter-scotchmen, and other curious creatures, but to the delicious rhymes of which "Robinson Crusoe's Story" is one. *The Admiral's Caravan* is almost if not quite as merry as *Davy and the Goblin* and there are two poems in it which several people — I, for one — consider among the best of their kind. No, I shall not tell you which they are — you must find them for yourself. . . . By the way, Carryl's little son, Guy, of whom I have

already told you, grew up to be a poet in his own right, and you will find two of his cleverest verses in this very book. If you care to hear more about him, turn to Note 28.

NOTE 25

The Hero Cockroach ..... *page* 225

This is a parody or burlesque of Kipling's hearty ballads. Although the poem itself is sheer nonsense, it has a certain resemblance to "The Ballad of East and West," especially in its rhythm and rhyme, and, though it is impossible to make head or tail of the story, we are pulled along almost as sharply as we are by Kipling's own lines — plus a continual tickling in the ribs. . . . Don Marquis has been running a daily newspaper "column" for many years and is the author of almost a dozen books, half of which are extremely serious and half of them anything but!

NOTE 26

The Yarn of the "Nancy Bell" ..... *page* 229

It is, of course, wrong of me to spoil your pleasure in this beautifully bloodthirsty ballad by saying anything about it. But there is one bit of information which is not generally known. When these verses, which have become famous all over the world, were originally offered to the English humorous weekly, *Punch,* they were rejected by the Editor on the ground that they were "too cannibalistic for its readers' tastes." . . . Later, these lines and more than fifty other similar poems were published under the title *The Bab Ballads,* one of the most glorious mirth-provoking collections ever made. *The Bab Ballads* would be sufficient to make the name of its author, W. S. Gilbert, immortal. But Gilbert has another hold on fame since he was the author of the many librettos to which Arthur Sullivan wrote his ever popular music. Among the Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas, which are as fascinating today as when they were written fifty years ago, one thinks at once of *The Mikado, Pinafore, Patience* and *The Pirates of Penzance.*

NOTE 27

De Appile-Tree ..... *page* 242

This, as you will see at once, is the way the story of Adam and Eve appears to an old darky on a Southern plantation. The time is supposed to be before the Civil War and the old slave, who has a strong religious streak in him, has his own ideas about what Eden must have been like. The author, Joel Chandler Harris, has

written some of the world's best tales of Negro life, and his "humanized" animals in *Uncle Remus and His Friends* and *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings* will live as long as American literature exists. (If you do not know these enchanting books, ask for them for your next Christmas present.) Uncle Remus himself is more than a "character"; he is an immortal.

NOTE 28

The Vainglorious Oak and the Modest Bulrush .....*page* 257

I have already spoken (in Note 24) of Charles E. Carryl's little son, Guy, for whom *Davy and the Goblin* was written. His full name was Guy Wetmore Carryl and even before he was out of college it was evident that he would become a master of light verse. He died just as he had turned thirty; had he lived, he would surely have risen to a height as great as W. S. Gilbert or Lewis Carroll. His best work may be found in three diverting volumes: *Fables for the Frivolous,* in which the fables of Aesop are turned upside down, *Mother Goose for Grown-Ups,* in which the nursery rhymes go on a wild spree, and *Grimm Tales Made Gay,* in which the old fairy tales are made to dance and jump through all sorts of rhymed hoops. To make matters still worse — or better — Carryl always supplied a Moral to all the poems in these books — and then added a pun, a humorous word-twist, to each Moral!

NOTE 29

Leetla Giorgio Washeenton .....*page* 260

I need not tell you that this is not the true story of George Washington and the famous cherry-tree episode. It is what T. A. Daly supposes an Italian immigrant would think about his own boy and our first President. It is an old man speaking, a peasant born in Italy who has lived in America for some years but not quite long enough to get everything quite straight. . . . If you like this poem — and I will be horribly disappointed if you don't — you should read all of Mr. Daly's poems in this book as well as other pieces of Italian-American life, such as "Mia Carlotta," "Between Two Loves," and "Da Leetla Boy," which may be found in other collections.

NOTE 30

The Tree .....*page* 266

When this poem was first published, it raised a perfect storm among the critics. Some said it was "atrocious," others thought

it "merely unintelligible." It seems perfectly simple to me — and I am sure it seems so to you. We have all been told hundreds of times that each of us has "several personalities." There are hours when we are contented to loaf, to "hang from a limb"; there are moments when we imagine we are poets, "quizzing the sky"; there are times when we are full of activity; and there are days when . . . Well, how many monkeys are *you?*

NOTE 31

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat ..... *page* 272

I wish I had room to quote *all* the nonsense verses by Edward Lear. (I *have* managed to squeeze in six of his Nonsense Limericks near the end of this section.) But if I did print all of the Lear lines that I want to, this book would be filled with nothing else. And I *must* make room for others! But as soon as you can find Lear's own volume, enlivened with his side-splitting illustrations, give yourself a happy half-hour with "The Jumblies," "The Pobble Who Has No Toes," "The Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo" and the other laughable lyrics.

NOTE 32

The Snark ..... *page* 274

If you can make any sense out of this or the next poem, you will do more than any other reader ever has done. The whole point of these two selections (and they are parts of a much longer poem) is that they have no point! Or, rather, they have no sense. I need not tell you that the author is the same Lewis Carroll who wrote the famous *Alice* books nor add that you should not be ashamed at laughing out loud — even at such "witless lines." It was a really wise person who concluded that:

"A little nonsense now and then
Is relished by the best of men."

NOTE 33

Lullaby ..... *page* 296

As you read this lullaby, you must imagine an old darky mammy rocking her little kinky-haired pickaninny to sleep. The place is a little cabin in the far South and the time is shortly before the Civil War. . . . The author, Paul Laurence Dunbar, knew his characters well, for he himself was born the son of Negro slaves. As a young boy he had dreams of being a poet, but he had to struggle for years before he became known. Even when he was writing the poems which have become so popular, he had to earn his living as

an elevator boy. Many of the loveliest things he wrote were written at this time and are contained in his *Lyrics of the Hearthside* and *Lyrics of Love and Laughter.*

NOTE 34

O Captain! My Captain! .....*page* 302

This has been called "one of the tenderest lyric elegies ever written." (An elegy is a song of mourning, a poem written on the death of some friend or beloved person.) These lines show how much our greatest President meant to our greatest poet. Whitman speaks of Lincoln throughout the poem as the captain of some vessel, but it does not need much imagination to know that the ship referred to is the "Ship of State." As the poem was written just after the assassination, we know at once that when the poet says "our fearful trip is done," he is speaking of the end of the long and bitterly fought Civil War. . . . Walt Whitman, whom the entire world considers America's "most characteristic and prophetic genius," wrote principally in a loosely rolling measure — something between "regular" poetry and a rich, musical prose — this poem being one of the very few he ever wrote in rhyme.

NOTE 35

The Song of Honor .....*page* 307

This, surely, is "a star to hitch to." Here is a lovely list of all that is brave and beautiful, uniting to give us "courage to endure." Even if its "message" were not so inspiring, the poem would move us by its pure loveliness of picture and sound. Some day, not too far off, I hope you will discover the rest of Ralph Hodgson's exquisite poems, especially "The Bull," which can be found in *Yesterday and Today.*

NOTE 36

The Example .....*page* 313

As a rule I hate "moral verses" or poems that try to "teach a lesson." But somehow, even though there *is* preaching in this poem, I like it. One reason why it appeals so strongly to me is because it is so straightforward and so simple. Its author, W. H. Davies, you see, is a very direct and simple person who writes about little things without any airs — almost without any thought — the very way a robin sings his few clear notes. Another reason why "The Example" charms me is because its "lesson" is conveyed in such a little space. Wouldn't we enjoy *all* sermons more if they were as short as this one?

NOTE 37

If— .....*page* 315

You may remember that I have already told you a little about the author of this poem, Rudyard Kipling. Kipling is, as I think I remarked, particularly known for his swinging ballads and tales of life in distant India. "If—" is one of his more recent poems and shows that he can interest us with a "lecture" as well as with a story. Although the poem is only a few years old, it already has become universally popular and you can see it hung on as many walls as pictures of George Washington or Whistler's Mother. Some of the things that Kipling advises us to do in these verses are fairly easy; others strike me as particularly difficult. Which of these "ifs" would *you* find hardest?

NOTE 38

Recessional .....*page* 322

Here is another poem by Rudyard Kipling, showing a still different side of his talents. "Recessional" was written in 1897 during Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee which celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of her rule. A hundred poems were written in honor of her glory and the power of the British Empire. All of them were, of course, full of praise—and all of them are forgotten. The only one which has lived is this "Recessional"—and it is a *critical* poem. By that I mean it questions the idea of mere pomp and power. Kipling warns his country not to be too proud of its strength and reminds it that Nineveh and Tyre—mighty cities in their day—are no more than drifting dust. Kings, towers, navies "melt away"; the one thing that outlasts them all is "an humble and a contrite heart." I do not think it needs the concluding "Amen" to make us realize that this is one of the noblest prayers of our time.

NOTE 39

Incident of the French Camp .....*page* 329

This story of quiet heroism is said to be founded on an actual incident which happened at the siege of Ratisbon by Napoleon in 1809. It is a vivid and dramatic picture and needs no word of explanation except to say that Ratisbon is the German city of Regensburg, an ancient town of Bavaria, and that Lannes was one of Napoleon's leading generals. The boy's name is unknown—but Browning has kept his spirit brightly alive.

NOTE 40

For Those Who Fail ..... *page* 332

An entire novel might be written about the career of Joaquin Miller, a California poet who was neglected in his own country and, after an almost hopeless search, found fame in England. (You will find an account of his varied life, with some of his poems, in *Modern American Poetry*.) This poem is one of his little known pieces and might be read in connection with his "Columbus" (in this same section), which is known everywhere. One poem celebrates the man who succeeds and the other glorifies the struggler who fails. Which seems to you to be the more "heroic"?

NOTE 41

Invictus ..... *page* 333

It would be an impertinence for me to say anything about these famous, stirring lines except to tell you, if you do not already know it, that "Invictus" is a Latin word, meaning "invincible." Here we have the high courage of the "unconquerable soul," the last two lines containing more actual "inspiration" than a hundred volumes on "How to Succeed"!

A FINAL AFTER-WORD

This book, as I have reminded you too often, is made up of poems most of which are either new or recent — nothing in this collection being more than seventy years of age and most of the selections being not even old enough to vote. But much of the greatest poetry belongs to the distant past — and I hope that, if you have liked the verses in this volume, you will dip into pages of the writers whose works are classics. Later on, you will grow to know (and, I believe, love) them more closely; but even now you might turn to the collected poetry of William Blake, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Robert Burns, Lord Byron, Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson — all of which you will find in any library, no matter how small. If you want to " sample " these authors, you will find selections from their work (and from the works of many other notables) in two collections which are among the best ever made: *The Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrical Poems,* edited by Francis T. Palgrave, and *The Oxford Book of English Verse,* edited by Arthur T. Quiller-Couch.

If you want closer acquaintance with *more recent poetry,* there are many collections (usually called " anthologies ") which will interest you. Nowadays the number of these anthologies has increased so rapidly that a mere list of them would take up at least six pages. Some of the best, besides the two older ones mentioned in the paragraph above, are:

The Home Book of Modern Verse, edited by Burton E. Stevenson.

Golden Numbers, edited by Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora Archibald Smith.

The Cambridge Book of Poetry for Children, edited by Kenneth Grahame.

The Listening Child, edited by Lucy Thacher. (Revised Edition.)

Rainbow Gold, edited by Sara Teasdale.

Poems for Youth, edited by William Rose Benét.

Come Hither, edited by Walter de la Mare.

And, if you don't think me too immodest for suggesting it, *Yesterday and Today,* edited by Louis Untermeyer.

If you are particularly interested in *old ballads and story-poems,* the following two collections contain most of the world's finest tales in verse:

The Oxford Book of Ballads, edited by Arthur T. Quiller-Couch, and

Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, edited by Lord Bishop Percy.

You will also find many ballads and exciting adventures in the works of modern poets. If your appetite has not been satisfied by the two collections just mentioned, I would recommend:

Collected Poems (especially the section "Barrack Room Ballads"), by Rudyard Kipling.

Collected Poems, by Alfred Noyes.

Ballads, by John Hay.

Ballads of Old New York, by Arthur Guiterman.

If you care more for quiet than for excitement, you will most likely prefer what is known as *nature poetry.* Some of the loveliest descriptions of field and farm, mountain and meadow, "brooks and blossoms" are in the following books:

Hesperides, by Robert Herrick.
Poems, by William Wordsworth.
Complete Poems, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.
Selected Poems, by W. H. Davies.

The mention of Longfellow reminds me that he is not only one of America's leading "nature poets," but one of the first to write actually *American* poems. You will find other verses about Indians, early Colonial life and accounts of the Revolutionary days in:

Complete Poems, by John Greenleaf Whittier.
Complete Poems, by Oliver Wendell Holmes.
Complete Poems, by Ralph Waldo Emerson.
Complete Poems, by James Russell Lowell.

In one of the notes, I already have spoken of *The Bab Ballads* as among the most rib-tickling poems ever written. If you enjoy *poems with chuckles* (and now and then a hearty laugh) you might look through:

A Nonsense Anthology, edited by Carolyn Wells.
A Book of Humorous Verse, edited by Carolyn Wells.
Nonsense Books, by Edward Lear.
The Burgess Nonsense Book, by Gelett Burgess.

Closely related to the poetry of humor is *dialect verse.* You will be surprised to see what different poets have done with "broken English." The first book listed below is Negro dialect verse written by a Negro who himself was the son of slaves; the second is written in a laughable "German-English"; the third is in the country twang of the mid-Western farmer; the fourth is in a half-humorous, half-pathetic Italian-American speech.

Poems, by Paul Laurence Dunbar.
Hans Breitmann's Ballads, by Charles Godfrey Leland.

Complete Works, by James Whitcomb Riley.
Carmina, and *McAroni Ballads,* by T. A. Daly.

Every section of America has had its own singer. The "laureate" of New England is Robert Frost, as is proved by his *North of Boston* and *New Hampshire;* the Far West has been celebrated by Bret Harte and Joaquin Miller; DuBose Heyward and Hervey Allen have told many tales of the South in their *Carolina Chansons;* Vachel Lindsay and Carl Sandburg give us many pictures of Illinois and the mid-Western states; even far Alaska has found a voice in Robert W. Service's *The Spell of the Yukon.* Listen and you will, like Whitman, "hear America singing."

With which last word, I take my books, my hat, your right hand — and my leave. And so, until we meet again, good-bye . . . and Good Luck!

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